The Beginning of the Beginning

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The Beginning of the Beginning

Chapter #1

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Enchanted by the song of a bird singing happily on the branch of a tree, a king had it caught and kept in a cage. Even singing is wrong in the presence of wrong people. The poor bird could not have imagined that his song would get him behind bars! The bird that flew in abandon in the free skies and flitted from one branch to another as he wished, now found himself in a golden cage, inlaid with precious stones to one who has tasted the freedom of the skies? A cage is a cage, whether of gold or iron.
The bird cried and cried, but the king and his courtiers thought he was singing aloud with joy! Some people can cry only like the bird did but to those who cannot perceive the cry would be an expression of joy. The bird was filled with agony and anxiety and he began to think: "Will my wings remember how to fly if I remain in this cage too long?" If he forgets the sky then of what use even if he were to be freed from the cage!

Only those that have the knowledge and the joy of freedom within their souls know what it is. By merely becoming independent, freedom cannot be known. The bird longed to be free before he lost memory of the sky.

One, morning the bird heard a fakir sing: "For him who seeks liberation, there is only one way -- the path of Truth. For him who seeks freedom there is only one way -- the way of Truth. And what is Truth?" The mendicant asks in his song. "Truth is to see things as they are; to know things as they really exist and try to live with them as they are and reveal them as such -- this is Truth; and he who attains Truth is liberated."

This was the Fakir's song Thus he sang in the streets each day. No one heeded him except the little bird for, a bird still knows the joy of vast spaces through its flights. Man does not know it any more. Man is completely oblivious of the wings he has which can take him to some unknown space. And so the saints and seers of yore tirelessly called out to mankind but who hears? But this little bird caught the Fakir's message and that very day it decided to try....

The king was in the palace when someone came to see him. He sent word through his servants to say that he was not within. The bird shouted: "No, no! The king is in his palace and he has ordered his guards to say he is not at home." The king was angry.

People tend to be displeased when truth is spoken, for all people live in untruths and falsehoods. And those who are the sovereigns, be they of kingdoms or wealth or religion; those that wield power of any kind are displeased with Truth, for power is always installed on the throne of falsity. Therefore those that hold power always crucify Truth, for if

a Truth is allowed to live, it becomes the cross for the governors

The king ordered that this bird be removed immediately -- how can Truth reside within palaces? Truth can have a place on the branch of a tree, but within the precincts of the royal abode -- it stands no chance. The bird was thrown out of the palace -- but that was its cherished desire! He began to dance in the open and said: "The fakir is right -- if you want to be free, Truth is the only way."

A parrot watching from a distance cried out: "Stupid bird, you lost a golden cage and you are happy about it? Not even one is fortunate to have it! It is only obtained by good deeds of our past lives. But you ignorant fool, you do not know the art of living in a golden cage. The first and foremost rule is to do exactly what the master says without thinking about right and wrong: for he who falls into this error cannot stay within it, Thinking begets rebellion and whosoever begins to think, cannot remain in captivity. Why did you commit the mistake of thinking, you silly bird? To think is dangerous. Sensible people never think. They stay within their prisons and call it their home, their temple. At the most, you could have decorated the bars from within; a decorated cage give the impression of a house." Remember, the majority of people adorn their cages in just this fashion and look upon them as their homes.

The bird paid no attention; he was mad with ecstasy, his wings fluttering in the gentle breeze -- for he was once again out in the open air. But the parrot continued to give his unasked, for advice. "Learn the art of retaining the golden cage from us parrots. We always say what the master says. We never say the truth. In fact, we do not care

to think that is truth. We say what the master says. What he does, is not to be mentioned. We see with the master's eyes and thing with his thoughts. We never use our eyes or our brains." Saying this the parrot quickly went and occupied the open cage. The guard shut the door.

The parrot is still within the cage, saying just what the master says. He will remain closed in that cage forever, for the parrots speak everything but the truth. The parrot is a bird after all, but among human beings too, the likes of parrots are numerous. These parrots too, repeat what their masters have said; and for thousands of years they have gone on repeating and to repeating what they have been told. There are parrots of scriptures, there are parrots of sects and cults, there are parrots of temples -- the whole of mankind is pestered with the noise these parrots make! And their voices, heard incessantly, capture our minds, so that gradually we too, become parrots. Then we are not even aware that there are open skies and that we have wings to soar into them; we are not even aware of that thing called soul or beatitude!

If you want to maintain peace in your captivity, do not ever mention the word "Truth." If life is accepted only as an existence in subjugation and confinement, never ever make the mistake of liking your eyes towards Truth. Consider him your enemy who talks about truth, for truth is dangerous; for truth leads to freedom and freedom offers no security.

There is great security in bondage. How safe is the cage? There is no fear of storms and high winds. The pouring of clouds and the flash of lightning hold no terror. No, there is no fear, man is safe within the bars of his cage.

In the vast skies are many dangers. Imagine, a tiny bird in the endless skies with their terrible storms and mighty gales -- there is no protection, there is no safety. That is why the majority of people prefer bondage. If you desire security, ask yourself -- do you want to be a captive? If that is so, do not ever talk of Truth. Then captivity, bondage, is the only answer. For be it of politics or religion of wealth or of words, if security is desired, it is best to be dependent.

The quest of Truth is not for those who believe in a safe and secure existence. It is a quest for eager and fearless souls... for those who have not forgotten their wings and the open skies. Deep within them, some lost remembrance stirs to break ties, pull down walls and fly... fly to that element where there are no walls, no fetters!

How few who feel stirred thus Look into thousands of eyes -- and this thirst for freedom may perhaps be found in the eyes of one in a million. Knock at a million hearts and perhaps one heart may resound with the resonance of Truth.

What has happened to mankind? Security has become everything in life. Security has become our religion -- live in security and die in security.

There is the story of a king who once built a special palace. He made it so impregnable that no enemy could enter it. We also, in life, make just such castles and take all precautions to keep the enemy away and be absolutely safe. What does man do all his life, after all? Why does he amass wealth? Why does he yearn for position and fame? So that he may feel safe and secure and life holds no terror for him. But the fun of the whole thing, and also the secret, is that the more measures he takes to safeguard himself, his fear increases in the same proportion. The king had also

conquered all there was to conquer. No the only fear was to guard himself from the enemy; for the enemy conquered is still the enemy.

He who tries to conquer others, makes enemies of all. Only he who is ready to accept defeat from another man alone be a friend in this world. The king wished to conquer the whole world so the whole world was his enemy and his fear had increased a thousandfold. When fear increased, it became necessary to make provisions for safety. He built a big palace with only one door. There were no other doors and no windows; not even a hole for the enemy to work through. Only one door -- guarded by thousands of soldiers with naked swords.

The neighbouring kind came to see this much-talked-of palace. He was terribly impressed and determined to make a similar palace for his own safety. While taking leave, he praised the king for his foresight and wisdom and reiterated his desire to follow his example. An old beggar sitting by the roadside heard this talk. He laughed aloud. The owner of the palace chided him saying: "What makes you laugh, fool?"

"Since you ask, Sire, I shall take the opportunity of telling you," said the beggar. "There is only one flaw in this marvellous structure. It is impregnable except for the door. The enemy can come through the door. If you step in and have the door covered with brick and mortar, it will be completely secure. Then no enemy can ever enter it."

"If I do as you say, you fool, this palace will become my grave," said the king.

"It already is," said the fakir, "except for the door. Through this door the enemy can come, and if not the enemy, death is bound to come."
"But I will be dead before that!" raved the king.
"Then understand this well." said the fakir. "As many doors as you had in your palace, so much of existence was with you. As you decreased the doors so also life diminished within you. Now one door is left -- one lone opening to life; close it and shut out life forever. Therefore I say, there is only one flaw." And he broke into peals of laughter again.
"I too had castles, your majesty,"the fakir continued. "Then I felt that they were no more than prison-houses. So I began to widen the doors and separate the walls. But I found that no matter how much I widened the doors the walls still remained, so I got out of the walls and came out in the open. Now I stay beneath the open skies and am alive in the perfect sense of the word."
But have we not all built as many walls around us as we possibly could? The walls that are made of brick and mortar are not that dangerous, for they can be seen. There are other walls -- subtle, imperceptible walls.... These are the hard screens -- glass screens of concepts, of doctrines, of scriptures. Absolutely invisible!
These walls we have built around our souls for complete security The thicker the walls, the farther it keeps us away from the open skies of Truth. Then the soul becomes restless and struggles; and the more agitated the soul is, the more we strive to strengthen the walls. Then a fear grips us -- perhaps this struggle, this restlessness, is due to the walls? The answer is "Yes." As long as the soul is

confined, it cannot attain bliss. There is no sorrow except in captivity.

And remember, the subjugation forced on you by others, is never more than superficial; it never touches you within. But the subjugation you accept yourself, enters your soul. We have accepted this subjugation over a very long period. Who has told you that you are a Hindu? Who has told you that you are a Muslim? And who asked you to be bound to Gandhi or to Marx? Who asked you to bind yourself? No, no one. You bound yourself with your own hands Who binds you to the Geeta? Who binds you to the Koran? Who ties you to the Bible? Nobody but yourself.

Certain bondages others heap on us, but there are certain others that we take on ourselves. The serfdom of others is very external and is no more than physical, but the slavery we accept of our own free will will tie even our souls in fetters. And so we are all held captives.

How can we set out in quest of truth with a mind in subjugation? A mind in bondage cannot traverse the path and the fettered soul never rises to the skies. More than trees are rooted in the soil, is man rooted with all his seeming mobility. The roots of our soul are deeply imbedded in tradition and society.

I therefore wish to speak on the first rule in the quest for truth, and that is that we should fully perceive our state of bondage. Man is a slave -- whose slave? He is a slave to his follies, his ennui, his ignorance and insensibility all his own. Only when this becomes a vivid realization can he take steps to eradicate this slavery.

The most unfortunate slave is he who does not even know that he is a slave. Wretched is the man who considers the

prison his home. He is the most confirmed of slaves who looks upon his shackles as ornaments, for then instead of breaking away from them, he is ever eager and watchful to protect them.

I have heard of a magician who used to rear sheep to sell to the slaughter house. He would feed them well and when they were fatted up, he would kill them and sell their flesh. What was more he would hypnotize his flock and make them believe they were lions, so that when the fatlings were killed before them, they were not afraid. They thought: "Well, these lambs, they are to be killed. We are lions and the question does not arise."

So every day one lot was killed and the rest remained blissfully unaware of their fate. It was only when their turn came that they realized the truth; but then it was too late. There was no way of escape. If they had pondered a little when they saw the others being killed, perhaps they would have run away. But the poor things had completely forgotten their origin. And when a lamb is under the illusion that it is a lion, it becomes the most Feeble and debilitated specimen of its kind. When someone asked the magician what he had done that his lambs did not run away, he said: "I have done to them what each man has done to himself. We believe ourselves to be what we are not. I made the lambs believe themselves to be what they are not."

Each man considers himself to be independent, and this is the biggest of falsehoods. As long as man believes he is a free soul, he will do nothing towards attaining freedom. Therefore it is very necessary to be aware first -- that we

are not free. And when I say "we", I do not refer to my neighbours alone. I include myself.

I am a slave and it is absolutely necessary that I undergo the entire pain and anguish of this slavery. It is necessary to experience all its different dimensions as well as the various directions from which this holds us in thrall. In what shape and manner it rides over us; what the links are that holds us captive -- all this must be known. It is impossible to break down this spiritual slavery without being fully acquainted with it.

If a man wants to escape from prison, what would he do? First of all he has to understand and accept that he is a prisoner and that he is in prison. Then he has to know his prison, every nook and corner of it, for then only can he plan his escape. The more familiar he is with the prison house, the easier will be the escape. That is why care is taken that the prisoner does not know the lay-out of the jail. Once he knows, he is dangerous and can break through anytime; for knowledge always liberates.

Even the knowledge of the prison liberator and therefore this knowledge is dangerous in the bands of the captive. The best way to keep the prisoner in the dark is to delude him into believing that the prison is a temple of God and no jail, and he is a free human being; and that all the world exists within its four walls; outside these walls there is nothing. And if he finds things unbearable, let him paint the dirty walls. Make a garden, grow flowers -- its fragrance will become a source of joy. Beautify the prison, for it is a house. And the captive who believes all this, will he ever be free?

First and foremost, we do not even remember that we are within a prison. How many kinds of prison-houses we go through from birth to death! Everywhere there are walls -- the walls of the prison. When a Hindu says: "I am a Hindu" and when a Muslim asserts that he is a Muslim, they both do not say they are imprisoned within their respective walls. They assert with such conceit, as if to be a Hindu or a Muslim or a Jain is a matter of great pride. When a man declares "I am an Indian" or "I am a Chinese" it is a matter of great pride for him. Little does he know that these are walls that prevent all men from merging into "One Mankind".

Whatever obstructs, is a barrier. If I refrain from meeting you, whatever stands between us is a barrier. If the Hindu fails to meet a Muslim, it is this wall that comes in the way; and it is the same between the Indian and the Chinese; the outcaste and the Brahmin. Whether this barrier is visible or invisible, whatever stands in the way of union is a wall -- and how many walls there are between man and man! These walls as exist between a Hindu and a Muslim, defy detection and we are not even aware of their presence. This is why they are dangerous, for we can see through them but we cannot extend our hand in friendship because of them. If a Hindu tries to extend his hand towards a Muslim, the wall stands between and the hand turns back. So is the case between the low-caste Sudra and the high-caste Brahmin. Therefore there is no meeting-ground and we do not realize that it is due entirely to the fact that each of us is enclosed within the walls of his own concepts and dogmas, and is incapable of seeing beyond them.

In Russia it is taught that there is no God. The children there grow up with this concept. An irrevocable line is drawn round his soul -- there is No God. Now this child will pass through life within the boundaries of this concept; and he will view the world only through this concept -- that there is no God. Now all his actions will be oriented by this concept.

If a man has to be held captive, he has to be enclosed within the walls of the prison but these prison-houses of the soul are very strange. They encircle you and go along with you wherever you go. Now when the ideas of non-existence of God is implanted in the mind of a person from childhood, he will live his entire life within this concept. Then he will not find God anywhere; for we are only capable of seeing that for which we are ready. And the person whose capacity of observation is stunted, is closed, comes to the conclusion that there is no God, he will be incapable of seeing anything.

You may turn round and say: "Then we are better off for we believe in the existence of God." It is not so. We are in an equal, if not worse, peril than they are. A man has taken for granted that there is God. He is convinced and so he will take no trouble to find him. He believes, that is enough -- there is nothing more to do. He believes -- and his belief that God is, becomes his prison-wall. He who believes that God is not, get bound within the boundary of his denial of God. So one is closed ,in theism and the other in atheism. Both are enclosed in their own sheaths. But only he can progress in the quest of truth who refuses to be bound within any of these walls He will say, "I do not know yet whether God is or is not but I will set no wall around me. I

shall not lean on any scriptures or dogmas. for these only serve to bind the person and make it difficult for him to find Truth."

During his sojourn at a village, a fakir was approached by its people who asked: "Will you not come to our temple, and tell us whether God is or is not?"

The fakir replied: "God? What has that got to do with you? Go, do your work. No one has anything to do with God. If it were so, this world would be a different place altogether Then this world would not be so ugly, so vile, so arrogant. If we had any purpose with God, we would have made a different world altogether. No, we have no interest in this direction, nor do those who sit in temples. The priests, the sadhus, crowds of sannyasins and gurus that have gathered together in His name, not even they have any interest in God; nor those that offer flowers and break coconuts on the temple walls. If God meant anything to us, this would have been a different place altogether. Go do your work; what business have you with God? Do not waste your time."

But the people would not leave him: "Today is a holiday, please do come."

Said the fakir: "So that is it: Now I understand. Because today is a holiday, you have time to spare for God. Man cannot sit without work, so when he has nothing to do, be thinks of God, and he tells his beads. So today is a holiday? Alright I shall come. But what will I tell you about God? For nothing could ever be said about God up to now. Those who said, made a mistake. Those who know, remained silent. I would be foolish if I said anything, for that will prove that I do not know. And you insist that I go with you? All right I will."

They went to the Masjid. There was a big crowd there. Crowds create illusions. It appeared as if people were eager to know about God. So the fakir said, "Since so many of you are eager to know about God, may I ask you: Do you believe in God? Does God exist?" All the people lifted their hands in acquiescence -- they knew God is and believed in Him.

"Then the matter ends there," said the fakir. "Since you are convinced that God is, there is no need for me to say anything. I must go back." And he left.

The people were nonplussed. They did not know what to do! Since they had raised their hands in favour of His existence they could not possibly turn round and deny Him. And who knows? Do you? But if anyone asks, you too will raise your hands.

This act is a lie! Truth cannot descend by any means into the life of a man who thus lies before God. And when a man gives false evidence of God's existence, when he has not the slightest idea of His whereabouts, he closes all doors of life to let him in. Then no ray of the eternal spirit descends in him. No light of the Supreme Reality will ever burn within him; no prayer v ill ever flow from within him; no flowers of divinity will ever bloom within him -- and yet he is convinced of God's existence! For this man does not take the trouble to look within himself and realize that he is uttering an atrocious lie; that he knows nothing whatsoever! And thus fathers prevaricate untruths to sons, and gurus to their disciples, and religious heads to their followers. None of them know of the existence of God. If you ask for clarification, they are shaken and their God-concepts crumble to bits, for no voice from within will corroborate

their statement. Perhaps as he tells you that God exists, a voice within him reprimands him: "What is this you say? You do not know at all!"
The fakir said: "Since you already know that God is, the matter is finished. But it surprises me that a village where so many people believe in God should be no different from any other village It is just the same!"
The village folk were now worried. What should they do? The next Friday they went to him again with the same request. The fakir said: "Last time you said you know God is. Now there is nothing left to say."
"Those were different people. We do not know God. Please come and enlighten us," they said.
The fakir exclaimed: "Oh wonderful Lord! These are the same people, I recognize their faces -- but they have changed!" The fact is, it does not take long for a religious man to change. A more dishonest person than he, would be hard to find: be is a different man in his shop and quite another in the temple: and no sooner he leaves the temple he is a completely different person.
This kaleidoscopic art should be learnt from the temple-goers, They can change their souls at a moment's notice. Even screen actors are not that skilful, for at most they change their faces or their clothes; but the temple-going man changes his very soul according to his needs. See him at his shop, look into his eyes -- he is a different man. See him as he sits in the temple, telling his beads -- he is another man altogether. Then as he leaves the temple, he is again totally different. He who was reading the Koran in the Masjid just an hour before, will feel no qualms to knife a man on the call of "Islam in danger!" He who was reading

the Geeta a while ago, will feel nothing it setting fire to houses in the name of the Hindu religion. It does not take men of such religiousness long to change; and as long as such people are considered religious people, irreligion cannot be wiped out from this world. To continue our story, however.

The fakir said: "Praise be to the Lord! How these people have changed! Never mind, if you are different people, I shall go." He went to the Masjid and said: "Friends, I ask the same question again, for today I am told there are different people, though many faces look familiar. 'Is there God?'"

The people replied in one voice: "No, God is not. We do not believe in Him, now you explain."

The fakir said: "Then the matter is over. When there is no God, where is the need to talk about Him? When He does not exist, then to what does your question relate? Is it in connection with that which is not? Which God, What kind of God, do you ask about?"

The people were floundered. It was difficult to get anywhere with this man. He told them: "Go back home. Why do you come at all in search of that which is not? What is your quest when you have found out He does not exist? Forgive me now and let me go."

The wise men of the village were now all the more anxious to hear him for they were convinced he held a secret. He was no ordinary fakir -- for an ordinary person is always eager to talk; give him a chance and he will speak. But this man turns down all occasions to speak! There is a mystery about this man.

On the third Friday they went to him again and put the same request, "But I have already been twice and the matter is ended," the fakir said.
The people said: "Today it is quite a different affair. Please come, for this time we shall give quite a different answer.
To this the fakir said: "He who comes prepared, his answers are always untrue. It only shows that you do not know the answer. He who knows, needs no preparation. Only he who does not, needs to be equipped.
Remember, all the answers you have come armed with, are false. Answers that "come" are the correct answers in life. All others are false. Truth is never prepared. Truth comes; untruth is always fabricated. Whatever the compound, is false; whatever comes, is the Truth. Truth is never provided, therefore whatever man prepares is anything but Truth. That is why all scriptures and doctrines and sects of the world are false, for man has made them. Man is not capable of creating Truth. Truth comes when this illusion falls that he can produce Truth. When man leaves all the man made tenets, Truth descends into him.
The fakir said: "I can tell you without your telling me, that your answers are false. But still, I shall go with you."
He went for the third time. Perhaps the village pundit thought they were very clever. They little knew that cleverness does not pay in the realm of Truth.
But the wise men of the village were confident. They were bent upon pinning the fakir down today. But they did not know that the very word fakir meant one who has broken all bridges that ensnare. They also did not know that when a man tries to ensnare another he gets trapped himself.

The fakir, however, went to the masjid. He addressed the gathering: "Friends, for the third time, the same question again. 'Does God exist or does He not?'"

Half the congregation raised their hands and said "God is" and the other half raised their hands and said "God is not." And on this they requested the fakir to speak. The fakir folded his hand and looked up at the sky: "Lord, this village is very entertaining!" Then he turned to the crowd: "You fools, since half of you know and half of you don't, why don't those of you who know tell the others who don't? Why do you drag me in between? You decide among yourselves." And he left.

Then the village pundits did not go a fourth time. They tried very hard to coin the fourth answer but they could not. The fact is, there are only three answers -- yes, no, or both. The fakir tarried long in the village, hoping they would come again but they did not. When someone asked him why he still stayed on, he said: "I am waiting for them. They might come for the fourth time, but they have not come."

"How can they?" the man asked. "What answer they could give you for the fourth time, they do not know."

The fakir, said, "If I were to tell you, my answer would also become useless, because for you, it will again become a ready-made reply."

The fakir then writes in his autobiography: "I waited for them to come and take me once more to the temple; and if they gave no reply when I asked the question, and if they waited in silence, I would have had to speak -- for their silence would have proved the sincerity of their quest."

They should be people with no pre-conceived notions, who set out on this quest with an open mind. Those who are burdened with beliefs can never never set out on this journey. Therefore, the first thing I want to stress in this matter is that only those who are able to break the prison-walls of doctrines and concepts can set out in quest of Truth.

We are all captives in the hands of dogmas and words and scriptures -- Truth cannot be for us. These dogmas are of gold, inlaid with precious stones. A cage can be of gold and of precious stones but that does not make it less of a cage. The lure in fact makes it more dangerous for one strives to break through an iron cage but a golden cage might still be attractive. We have thus bound our own minds ourselves, and until we free ourselves from all these bondages, we can never rise towards Truth; for till then, we cannot see that which is. We shall, till then, try to see things as we want them to be, and as long as we desire something, we cannot know that which actually is. As long as we design Truth in our own fashion, till then we implant ourselves on Truth.

As long as we say God should be like this -- playing the flute, carrying the bow and arrow -- till then we endeavour to impose our own imagination on God. Then it can be that we get visions of Krishna playing the flute or of Rama with his bow and arrow or of Jesus hanging on the cross. But all these are projections, of our own mind and have not the remotest connection with Truth. It is a play of our desires. These are our own dreams and he who takes dreams for reality destroys all possibilities of realizing Truth.

No -- Truth is known by only those who are not influenced by doctrines; by those who are prepared to face all eventualities and are willing to break off all shackles for its attainment. The wonder of it is, that truth asks only for the shackles that bind us: "Leave all subjugation, and you will attain me," It says. But we are not ready to surrender our fetters. We get attached to them: the older they are, the more we are attached, and those that come down from our ancestors are the hardest to give up. The father passes them on to his son and the son to his son for safe custody.

Men die but the shackles continue from generation to generation, so that they are thousands of years old; so much so that we have forgotten that we are tied to them. But remember that you cannot realize Truth as long as you hold on to even one dogma; be it of a theist or an atheist, of a Hindu or Muslim or a Christian, and say: "I consider this doctrine as right." For where is the sense of any doctrine being correct before attaining Truth? Until I attain Truth, how can I say which doctrine is correct? If you have seen me and seen pictures of me, you will know which is the real picture, but if you have not seen me how can you point me out from a number of pictures and say it is mine? Without having seen me, you cannot point at my picture and if you do, it will be false.

Which scripture, which doctrine, which Teerthankar, which incarnation, which son of God is the right one. How will you know until you know the Truth? You have no knowledge of Truth but you have come to know the authenticity of the Shastras and dogmas. This is how we are tied to untruths and it is not possible for us to know the Truth.

So the first thing to do is to look intently for our mental fetters. That the fetters do not appear as such makes the search immensely difficult. But once what binds one is identified then it is not difficult to break loose. It is not difficult to gather courage.
How are these chains to be broken? We shall think on this later. For today, you just ponder on this: "Am I a slave? Is my mind imprisoned? Have I made any walls around me? Do I hold any doctrine as Gospel Truth?" It is necessary to be alert and aware. Attachments, if any, are to be broken. Once a person summons courage, a powerful energy gets born within him. Let him dare once, and a great soul is born within; and once he is settled within himself, no force on earth can enslave him. God begins to draw close to the man whose eyes inclined towards the open skies.
The Eternal Spirit is like the open skies. He who opens his wings and flies, invariably attains him. But alas, souls locked in cages cannot reach Don't you ever feel: "Where are my wings?" Don't you feel the thirst for freedom within your soul? Don't you feel your slavery at times? With these questions, I close my talk for the day. Keep asking yourself these questions as you leave the hall. Ask again and again, even as you sleep, "Am I a slave? If I am, then am I happy to be one?" Tomorrow I shall talk on the second formula.

The Beginning of the Beginning

Chapter #2

Chapter title: From Delusion Towards Truth
26 February 1969 am in

One expansion is external. The eyes look out; the hands feel the touch of external objects; the ears hear the outside sounds. But there is an expansion within also, which the eyes cannot see the ears cannot hear, and bands cannot touch. That is why, perhaps, what is within remains unknown and unfamiliar. Or perhaps it is because it is so close to us that we cannot see it.

What is at a distance can be seen; that which is close lacks perspective. To see, there must be some distance between us and the object. I can see you because there is a distance between us. I cannot see myself because there is no distance whatsoever between me and myself. The eye can behold all except itself. We who know all, are unable to Know ourselves. Al d in the quest for Truth, he who does not know himself, what else is he capable of knowing? And for he who knows himself, what else is left to know in the quest for Truth.

The first experience of Truth is within one's own self for that is the nearest point of access. We can know everyone externally but have no way to penetrate the internal being; and for this there is only one point of approach -- one's own intrinsic self. Hence the first door to the temple of truth is the self within. But it is a strange enigma -- life passes away and there is no trace of one's self, not even a faint suggestion of it! A whole lifetime is wasted without a hint Or the self!

There was a thinker by the name of Schopenhauer. One night he went to a public park for a walk. It was about three in the morning and quite dark as yet. He was so engrossed in a problem that he did not know when he reached the garden, but the night-watchman saw him. He came with his

stick and lantern to investigate. He could not see him clearly but he was sure that the man who had stolen into the garden at this time of the night, and was talking loudly to himself, was a madman. He thumped his stick and called out "Who are you? From where do you come and why have you come here?"

Schopenhauer laughed and said: "That is a difficult question you ask, my friend. All my life I have been asking myself this question: Who am l? From where do I come and why? And this is what you ask me too! Would that I had an answer to your question!" The gardener was convinced he was mad for he knew not from where he came or why -- but do we know?

We too may laugh at Schopenhauer but our plight is just the same. We too do not know who we are, from where we come or why and to what purpose is this journey of life. We are not acquainted with a single essential factor of life. The nature of life is a closed book to us. The greatest wonder is that we are strangers to our own selves! Who am I? -- and if I do not know this basic fact, how will I know the other aspects of Truth? To know one's self is the first unconditional step in the direction of Truth, without fulfilling which, this search is impossible.

People ask me all kinds of questions: "Does God exist? Is liberation a fact?"... and many more such queries are made but never one asks: "Who am I What am I?" The basic question of religion is not God but the being of the Self. The journey of Truth is inward and not outward. Whatever the search in the outside world, it does not lead to Truth. At the most, it reveals knowledge for day-to-day life. Truth is known only by going within.

It happened that a city-beggar died. Deaths occur every day and the death of the beggar was nothing unusual. But his death made news! For thirty-five years this man had stood at the same spot and begged. In deference to his perseverance, the people of that town decided to bury him in the same spot. So they began to dig a pit and lo, to there amazement, they found a vast treasure buried right under the spot where the poor man stood and begged all his life! People derided his fate and condemned his foolishness. If he had dug the ground underneath instead of stretching out his hand for alms, he would have been the owner of this fortune! But it did not occur to anyone among them that perhaps he too was in the same plight! Deep within him too, there are vast treasures that he has never explored, and he has spent all his life in trying to gain them from outside. Where we stand, where our Existence is, our very Being, is a priceless treasure-house. But we dig into scriptures, catch hold of the feet of gurus, get involved with words and doctrines and never search where iI actually is. No one looks within -- one looks in the Koran, one looks in the Bible; one refers to Buddha or to Mahavira but never to where it exists in his own Being.

Whenever Truth is attained, it is attained from our own self. The attainments of Buddha or Mahavira or Christ, were individual attainment that had no outside source. Whenever Truth has been realized, it has been realized within the self; and because our search is always outside of the self, we spend ourselves in vain and fail to attain this treasure. Therefore the first part of the second rule must be well understood: TRUTH IS WITHIN ONE'S OWN SELF. It therefore cannot be acquired by asking others. Truth is

never dropped into a beggar's bowl, nor obtained on credit. Truth cannot also be learned from others, for all our knowledge is the knowledge of the outside -- all our demands are sought outside. Truth is within us. It has neither to be studied, nor learned, nor demanded -- it has to be dug out from within us. That ground where we stand has to be excavated and the treasures of Truth will reveal themselves.

Yet another story comes to my mind: It is said that soon after making the world, God made Man; but no sooner had He made him than God became worried! He called all the devatas and expressed His fears. He said: "Perhaps I have made a mistake in creating Man. He will not let me be in peace. Every minute I find him at my door with some complaint or the other. What shall I do? Where shall I hide that he cannot find Me?"

The devatas made many suggestions. One said: "Hide in the peaks of the Gaurishankar!"

"You do not know," said God, "Soon Tensing and Hillary will be there -- very soon."

"Another said: "Hide in the Pacific Ocean."

God said: "But very soon the scientists will probe the five mile depth of the Pacific."

Some others suggested the moon and the stars. God said: "You do not know. Man will acquire means to reach there too. All these places are vulnerable."

Then an old devata whispered in His ears: "Hide within Man's own being for he will never go there."

And he accepted his advice and withdrew into Man's heart; and it is a fact that Man never goes there. With the exception of his heart, Man explores all avenues but his

steps never lead him to the realm within him. Perhaps we are completely oblivious of this path within; perhaps we do not know of the door within; perhaps we are unaware that within also there is something, and missing which, we fail to reach the Truth.

If someone asks: "Where is the temple of Truth? Where does Truth abide?" there is only one answer: "That which is the 'Inner-ness' the 'Being-within', is the temple of Truth, its abode, its haven." We plant a seed in the ground; it sprouts into leaves and branches and becomes a big tree. Have you ever thought that this big tree, under which so many people rest... from where has it come? Where is its being? Is it in the little seed from which it started? Break the seed -- there is no sign of the tree, but it is very much there, hidden in the being of the seed. This vast expanse of the world -- this too is hidden in the seed of this "being within" and it grows and spreads all around from there. We too are hidden within ourselves, in the folds of the seed of our Being. From there, we appear, expand, then shrink and fade away. All motion of life is from within to without. All things grow from within and spread without -- the expansion is always outside. The reverse never happens: nothing goes within from without. And our attention is only drawn towards this -- our being, our soul -- when we are completely relieved of the outside world. When the eye is freed of the world outside, then only is it free to look within.

It is natural then, that as long as we project our vision on the objects outside, we are unable to see within. A wandering eye cannot delve within. We are habituated to see the outside, for we think that whatever is obtained is

from the outside. All our attachments are outward oriented and hence this illusion. We can only start to look within when it becomes clear to us that no one has ever attained anything from outside. Those who have looked without have looked in vain; they have laboured in vain for they have reached nowhere.

Perhaps you know the story of Alexander -- that when he died his hands were kept dangling outside of his bier. People began to wonder at this gross oversight on the part cf his ministers, for Alexander was a mighty emperor. But no one seemed to take note of this omission, though great kings and soldiers were taking turns to shoulder his bier! By evening things became clear. Before he died, Alexander had asked his friends and ministers to keep his hands outside the shroud, for he wished the world to know that even the mighty Alexander, the conqueror of the world, left empty-handed. A whole life time was spent in seeking and striving in the outside world all in vain.

We too will go empty-handed, for nothing is ever attained outside of ourselves. But we live always in the hope of attaining from the outside world. Life comes to a close, and hope changes Into despair. Not a single man on the face of this earth has been able to claim that he achieved what he sought outside; and not a single one, who sought within, has ever said that he searched within but did not find.

Therefore I call religion the Ultimate Science. The meaning of science is, knowledge without exceptions. And though we may find exceptions in science -- in the realm of religion, there has not been a single contradiction. All those who searched outside without a single exception, attained

nothing; and all those who searched within, without exception, attained everything.

Therefore I wish to lay stress on the second rule -- that the treasures of Truth are not outside of you. The truth of life is within. Once this becomes clearly evident, the journey within begins. But we are so outside-oriented -- the vast expanse of the world without and all that it contains -- That somewhere within us, we feel that everything is outside, and what could possibly be within?

The within seems so small and insignificant compared to the magnitude of the world that spreads beyond the horizon infinite! Within? There seems to be nothing It appears too small nd insignificant for our attention when viewed against the vast outside world. But the question is not of great or small, and besides, we have not travelled within to know what it is like. It is only when we go within that we realize that the inside is capable of holding infinite worlds within itself. It is limitless.

Go within and you shall know; delve within and you shall find. It is the experience that will prove the validity of the statement. Things outside have their boundary but the within is limitless. However, there is no other way of finding this out except by going into one's own self. There are things in life which can only be known by experience. If there is a pain in my arm, I cannot explain the quality of the pain, no matter how much I try; nor can I show to you by any means that "Here is the pain." Even if the arm is dissected, the pain cannot be drawn out for inspection. The mind thinks incessantly, but on opening the skull, we shall find the brain and the nerves but no thoughts. Thoughts have never been seen, but if we insist on a

concrete proof of their existence we shall have to state that there is nothing like thoughts. We all, however, know that thoughts are. We all know that love is, thought it is impossible to point it out physically anywhere in the heart, for this is no gross matter that can be presented to view. Thus, though these things like love and pain cannot be displayed, we still know for certain that they exist within us.

And this little flame of love, when it manifests itself in a person's life, is small no longer. When love awakens within, all the world becomes too small, too insignificant, before it. When agony rises within, it reduces the world outside to a grain of sand. When bliss awakens within, all joys of the world pale into insignificance.

The greatness and smallness of things can only be gauged when we experience that which is within. And when the Truth within is realized, we experience its magnificence and magnitude and find that the vast expanse of the universe stands nowhere near it! We are totally ignorant of this experience for we have never tried to step in this direction.

We are like the blind man who could never know light no matter how hard he tried. All books on the subject of light would only cause confusion and false conceptions and never lead to the comprehension of light.

Ramakrishna used to tell a story: A blind man was once invited to dinner by his friends. There were various dishes prepared in his honour and he enjoyed them all thoroughly. Then he picked up a piece from the dish he liked best and asked to be told what it was. The host said it was a milk preparation. "What is milk?" asked the blind man.

"Have you seen a sea-gull? It is as white as the wings of a sea-gull," he explained.
"What is a sea-gull?" asked the blind man again. "And how do I know what its wings are; and what do you mean by white?"
The host was nonplussed. How could colour be explained to a blind man? But the blind man insisted -- he had to know. Then one man came forward; he curved his hand and held it in front of the blind man and said: "Feel my hand. The sea-gull's head is as shapely and graceful.
The blind man felt his hand and his face lit up with delight! "Now I know what milk is like -- a curved hand!" His friends were filled with despair, for now it was worse than before. He who knows not from within cannot be made to understand from without. If initially the man knew what colour was like, he could be made to understand from the outside -- but then there is no need to make him understand!
This is the problem -- the greatest problem in life: those who, know, need no explanation and there is no way of explaining to those who do not know. In trying to explain to the latter, more problems are created. WHAT IS KNOWN, IS ALWAYS KNOWN FROM WITHIN; AND WHAT IS IMPARTED, IS ALWAYS THE SUPERFICIAL KNOWLEDGE. Therefore, Truth cannot be expressed; it can only be known. To know, one should have some grasp, some acquaintance within; to be instructed means to be taught and explained by one who has this grasp.
Buddha was a guest in a village. The people there brought a blind man and requested Buddha to explain to him what

light was, for this man refused to believe there was anything like light. He would only concede to its existence if he could touch it with his own hands. A blind man's knowledge of life is through the sense of touch. For him, for anything to exist, it should be felt by touch. And he is not wrong. That is the only way he knows; touch is the only proof of being. What he cannot feel, does not exist. The blind man laughed at their chagrin. "You cannot bring light, why do you then indulge in useless talk? There is no light," he said.

His friends had brought him to Buddha in the hope that he may be able to convince him. His demand was plain: "If your light exists I must be able to feel it, I must be able to taste it, hear it. And if it has any fragrance, I should be able to smell it." But all this is impossible with light -- it can only be seen. Then the blind man asks: "What is this seeing?" If he knew what it was to see, he would not be blind -- and so he merely scoffs at others; and blames them for their mean tricks to prove him sightless. "I cannot see light nor can you -- for there is no such thing as light," he asserts.

Buddha said: "It is futile to explain to him and I shall not commit that folly. What this man needs is a doctor and not a philosopher. He needs treatment for his eyes and not sermons for his soul. Get his eyes treated that he may see; then he will know. A thousand Buddhas will not be able to convince him."

The man was taken to an eye-specialist and was cured within six months. When Buddha passed that way again, the man went to him. "Light is," he said and fell at Buddha's feet.

"Where is it?" Buddha asked, "I want to touch it."
"It cannot be known by touch or taste."
"Let me smell it," Buddha insisted.
"Please do not laugh at me Sire! The past is over. Now I can see that it is."
"Why did you not believe your friends when they told you?" asked Buddha.
"The fault was not mine," said the man, "for how can a blind man understand light? And if I had taken their word for granted, I should still have been a blind man, and then I should never have known."
TRUTH IS TO BE KNOWN; IT CANNOT BE SUPPOSED. It can neither be inculcated nor communicated. There is no "learning" of Truth. Therefore there are no schools where truth is taught and people can learn. But there is a remedy -- the eyes can be treated How? We shall discuss this tomorrow in the third rule.
For the present, in the course of the second rule, it is necessary to know that Truth can be known, but this knowing comes always from within. What we call knowledge always comes from outside, whereas 'knowing' always comes from within. We can obtain the knowledge of light from books but not the "knowing" of light; that has to come from within. Thus there is a difference between knowledge and knowing. Knowledge makes a man learned but not wise. Wisdom comes only by knowing -- knowing oneself.
A man may read all the books on swimming. He may become an authority on all the information regarding swimming. He may even qualify to lecture on the subject -- but do not ever push him into water, for whatever his

qualifications, he cannot swim! To know swimming and to know about it, are two entirely different things. It is quite possible that one who knows swimming may be unable to explain it. He might say: "All I know is that I jump into water and -- I swim! You too, will swim if you jump. If you insist on him clarifying his statement, one will say: "How is it possible to speak about it? I can jump in the water and demonstrate. What discussion can there be in the matter of swimming?"

So also, we can know about truth but that is not knowing truth. There is a great number of such learned pundits who know about truth, but those who "know" truth are few and far between. And invariably these learned pundits become the enemies of the saint and the seer. This is natural, for the superficial knowledge of the pundit, holds no ground before the lofty knowledge of self experience. One who "knows," knows there is no need to discourse; knowing is enough. Of what worth is the knowledge if one cannot swim?

There was a fakir, Mulla Nasrudin. He used to ply a boat to earn a living For two paise he would take a person across the river. Once a pundit got into his boat. As they were going along the pundit asked the Mulla: "Mulla, have you any knowledge of mathematics?"

"Mathematics?" asked the Mulla, "What does it look like?"

The pundit was shocked. "You do not know the science of numbers? Your life is spent in vain. Four annas worth of your life has gone to utter waste."

After some time he asked again. "Mulla, do you know astrology?"

"What in the name of heaven is that?" asked the Mulla.

The pundit shook his head in despair. "Mulla!" he said, "Eight annas worth of your life is wasted. If you do not know astrology, what else can you know?" And then a storm arose. A strong gale began to blow and the angry waves tossed the boat up and down. The Mulla asked; "Punditji, can you swim?"

"Not at all!" said the pundit. "Then sixteen annas worth of your life have gone completely to waste!" And so saying the Mulla jumped into the water and swam ashore.

This "knowing about things," is not of much value in life. To stand before Truth holds some meaning, but to go about acquiring knowledge of Truth is meaningless. Whatever we know about the outside is always relative and never the truth about Truth, for it is not possible to know this way. Once we understand this, we can take out first step towards Truth. If someone comes and tells you that Truth is like this or God is like this -- what can you possibly know except words? And there is nothing in words.

We do not make such mistakes in our day to day life: Take for instance the word "horse." We look it up in the dictionary and it says "it is an animal we ride on" -- but we do not take hold of that word and ride on it! We know that only the horse in the stable can be used for riding. The dictionary horse is a mere word. We never take words on their face value in the ordinary course of things, but in spiritual matters, we have placed our full trust in them. The word "God" is written in a book and w e bow before that book! It is just like riding the dictionary horse! If our feet happen to touch the holy book, we are filled with remorse. The feet have only touched words and not God. There is nothing in words. Words are mere lines drawn on

blank paper. Some even carry the holy scriptures on their head. No scriptures are religious, for they are nothing more than words. We do not take the word for the horse but we have no hesitation in taking the word for God. Then we worship these words, learn them by heart; and by repeating them again and again, we want it to be known that we know!

If a man learns the Geeta by heart, he is supposed to be learned. How is that possible? That, on the contrary, is the mark of a stupid person.

If someone rattles off the Geeta or the Koran, he is looked upon with great respect. What has he got? A mere recording of words. Take away these and he is left with nothing. He has u much God with him as one who repeats the word "horse." If a man has the word "horse" well planted in his mind, that is no reason to believe that the man has a horse! But if someone repeats the word "God" several times, we readily belive that God is with him.

In the matter of truth also, we have readily accepted words. Nothing but words can come from the outside; truth comes from within. When this becomes absolutely clear, we are freed from the outside entanglements and ready for the journey within. But as long as we think that we stand to gain from the outside world, we cannot hope to traverse the path of truth.

Ouspensky was a marvellous thinker from Russia. He had written many books, one of which had brought special fame. It was said that there was no book in the world to equal his. Our famous book was written by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle -- THE ORGANUM. This was the first book on truth. The second book on truth was written

by Bacon and it was called NOVUM ORGANUM. The third and final book was Ouspensky's TERTIUM ORGANUM. It is said that these are the three most wonderful books in the world.

At the time Ouspensky went to visit Gurdjieff He was a famous man, Gurdjieff was a simple fakir Ouspensky said to him: "I want to put some questions to you." Gurdjieff handed him a blank piece of paper and said: "Before we talk, write down all that you know and all that you do not know. Then we shall talk on that which you do not know. That which you know already, needs no elucidation. It will only profit you if r talk or the matters you do not know." That was a strange way to greet a famous man! However Ouspensky took the paper and went in a corner of the room He meant to make a long list. But when he started to write, he found himself in a strange predicament! He asked himself: "Do I know God?" The answer came from within him: "I know about God but T do not know God at all!"

"Do I know the soul?"

"I know about the soul but that is all."

For almost an hour he grappled with himself but could not bring himself to write anything. He went up to Gurdjieff and handing the blank paper to him said: "Forgive me, Sir. I have been under an illusion. I thought I knew, but the way you spoke and the look in your eyes make this seemingly simple question impossible to answer. I cannot dare to get away from you with what I thought I 'knew'."

"How did you then write all those famous books?" asked Gurdjieff

"They do not matter now. I was under the spell of mv so-called learning. When you spoke to me, for the first time

the question stood so glaringly before me that I am overwhelmed with my ignorance! Now I feel I know nothing! I have revelled enough in words and taken them for knowledge hut as far as knowing is concerned, my attainment is zero."

"In that case," said Gurdjieff; "you are qualified to know, for you have understood the very basic fact that you know nothing."

This is the first step to knowledge: to know that you know nothing. This act of concession requires great courage. To acknowledge to oneself that "I do not know," is a great feat for at once the ego within, rebels. "Preposterous!" it exclaims. "I have the Geeta by heart, I have read the Upanishads, I go to the temple every day and take part in all religious talks -- how can I not know? Swords are unsheathed to settle questions of knowledge and custody is claimed of that which we do not know; and if words have failed to disclose Truth so far, they will always do so. Nothing will be gained by learning words even if we try for a number of lives. Such knowledge merely creates an illusion of knowing. Then how are we to know? What is the path of knowledge? Study and contemplation were considered methods so far. We were always told that by reading books and discussing shastras and listening to the learned, knowledge was gained. Nothing could be more false than this, for nothing is gained on matter how much you read or hear.

The illusion of knowledge created by such learning has proved more dangerous than ignorance itself, for the ignorant man is at least conscious of his ignorance and may perhaps try to find out, whereas this is impossible under the

illusion of knowing. I or a knowledgeable man, there is nothing for her to know.

This world suffers not so much because of ignorance as pseudo-knowledge. This is why we are so far away from Truth.

When Socrates became old, he sent word round to the whole of Athens exhorting the Athenians not to call him a wise man! "When I was young, I was under the illusion that I knew. As my understanding increased," he said... and his words are worth nothing. He says: "As my understanding increased, my knowledge evaporated. Now that my understanding is complete, I am thoroughly convinced that no man is more ignorant than I am."

The people of Athens were filled with joy, for the wise in Athens knew that Socrates had entered the temple of Truth. When the ignorant questioned: "But he proclaims his ignorance and you say he has realized Truth?" They replied: "Only those can enter the temple of Truth whose illusion of knowledge is broken; those whose nature becomes so guileless that with the innocence of a child they declare they know nothing! For them the doors of Truth are always open."

The one to whom his ignorance becomes evident, starts to look inwards. Relieved of the burden of outside knowledge, man turns his gaze within. No one turns inwards so long as he expects to gain from without; from scriptures etc., for till then the "turning in" does not occur. Hence the second rule demands complete freedom from the tangle of words. This can only be if we are convinced that words are false and Truth is never revealed through them. To be free from

words is to travel within. Outside there are words and within there is silence. Words have no room there.
So this is the second rule: TO START ON THE QUEST OF TRUTH, BE RID OF ALL PSEUDO-KNOWLEDGE. Be rid of the knowledge that is cultivated, that is borrowed, so that, that knowledge can be investigated which is never borrowed, never obtained from others and which is ever-present within. That knowledge is true which is written in the self and not in the books; which has not to be begged for, but rises from within and spreads on all life. Such knowledge cannot be snatched away for it comes from the self within. Knowledge attained from others is always uncertain and dubious and can never be relied upon; but the knowledge that arises within is irreproachable and beyond the shadow of doubt.
In the course of his search for truth, Vivekanand once approached Maharishi Devendranath. It was a dark night and the Maharishi stayed in a boat on the Ganges. Vivekanand crossed the river and reached the boat. He pushed the door that was already open and found the Maharishi in meditation. He caught him by his neck and shook him. The Maharishi opened his eyes and was startled to see a youth, drenched from top to toe, standing before him. "Tell me if God is!" he demanded of the Rishi. Many had asked the question before but never this way! What was this way of asking about God, at this untimely hour and in this drenched condition! The Maharishi was unnerved. He hesitated a little, then said, "Sit down son, calm yourself and then we shall talk."
"There is nothing to say now. Your hesitation has given the answer." So saying, Vivekananda leapt back into the water

and was gone. In vain the Maharishi called out to him -- but he did not return.

The same youth, after two months, approached Ramakrishna and asked him in the same manner: "Does God exist?"

"There is nothing except God. Do you want to know? If so, say so," came the reply. Do not worry whether God is or is not. Whether you want to know is all that matters, was the meaning behind his words.

It was now Vivekananda's turn to be taken aback! He writes in his diary: "Till then I had taken my mentors by surprise. It had never occurred to me whether I was ready to search for God; but with this man, it was different. Those whom I had asked so far had only words and so were not sure of themselves. Ramakrishna had experience and not words."

Where there is experience, there is no hesitation, and no doubt. But such knowledge comes always from within; it liberates and is indubious. But the within must be emptied of all spurious knowledge before the eye can turn inwards; for he who clutches stones and fills his treasure-chest with rubble can never hope to gather precious gems.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon him to know that what he has amassed and held onto so far is worthless, and needs to be thrown away to make space for the genuine treasure. What is important is to be able to discern the rubble and rock so that the diamonds may be known. It is very necessary to know what is nor knowledge in the quest for knowledge. Whatever is inculcated from without is not knowledge; what is imparted through words is not knowledge, what has come from others is not knowledge.

Once this is clearly understood -- that such knowledge is false -- then the search for that knowledge which is true knowledge can beg n.

Therefore I state once again in the course of this second rule: Be free of knowledge to attain real knowledge. Be rid of knowledge that "the knowledge" can be born. As you go home, ask yourself on the way: "Whatever knowledge I have, is it my own." Do I "know" it? If I do not "know" it, it is of no use; it is no knowledge; it is nothing more than stale and borrowed information."

Man is a strange creature: he readily believes rumours -- not only about others but about truth also! You have to ask yourself: "Do I really know what I know?" It is a harsh question to ask and to be asked without bias, for it hurts the ego The question will snatch away the illusion of knowledge and erudition. One by one, the bricks will fall. Test your knowledge on this one touchstone and know that that which you do not "know" is not knowledge. That which I do not know is no knowledge for me even if the whole world knows it.

Once this is clear, we can proceed to the third rule but not before that. We have to step onwards -- from the first to the second. We have to let go of the first lower rung in order to climb the next step of the ladder. It is only when old grounds are traversed and left behind that new grounds can be explored. If we refuse to leave the old ground, no amount of instructions will help. LET THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HAS BEEN LEARNT GO, SO THAT THE UNLEARNED KNOWLEDGE MAY FIND SPACE TO EMERGE.

On the third rule, we shall talk tomorrow.

The Beginning of the Beginning

Chapter #3

Chapter title: From Belief Towards Truth
26 February 1969 pm in

Friends have asked many questions. One friend asks: "You say that Truth is not obtained from words, much less from scriptures and from gurus, then what is the purport of your talk?"

Truth will not be obtained from my talk -- please understand this well. Nobody's words can convey Truth. If a thorn gets embedded in your foot, you can use a second thorn to remove it; but once the thorn is out both become equally redundant. My words will not deliver Truth. but they can act like the thorn to remove the thorn of illusion of knowledge that you hold as your own. When this happens, my words will have served their purpose and become equally useless.
Words, be they from anybody, do not convey Truth. But if words delete words; if words are erased; and if the mind is emptied so that words have no hold on it, then of itself the mind attains Truth; for Truth is nowhere outside It is within each one of us. Once the mind gives up its habit of Looking outward, Truth is not difficult to attain. As long as we look to gurus, we look outside; as long as we hold on to shastras, we are looking outward As long as we cling to the

cognition of other's words, that which is attained in the No-Word, silent states remains unknown.

A poet once went to the seashore. It was early morning: The sun's cool radiance filled the sky. The breeze came with a touch of the waves. The joy of the scene filled the poet's heart too. Delighted he began to dance. Oh the bliss, the joy!... but his thoughts went back to his beloved, lying in in a hospital. How he wished that she were here beside him to share this beautiful morning! He was a poet, so the scene affected him more. Tears welled up in his eyes but soon he wiped them away. "What if I filled a casket with this beautiful morning and sent it to her?"

He brought a box and lovingly opened its lid to the wafting breeze and the dancing rays. He then sealed it with care and sent ;t to his beloved, explaining to her how much he had missed her in those lovely surroundings, but that he was sending them to her in a box.

The letter reached: so did the box but when she opened it there were no rays of the sun, no cool breeze, no glory of the morning that her lover had described. It was only an empty box.

What is at the seashore cannot be carried in a box; and also there is no way to fill the experience of the Ocean of Truth in the chest of words.

Only words, blank and empty, remain. That which was experienced at the seashore is left far behind. Those who reach the shores of Truth, they too, long to convey the joy of their experience to those they love; so that those who could not come that far may also get a glimpse of that wonderful experience. They fill their chests with words and send them to us. The Geeta, the Bible, the Koran reach us;

but that which they tried to send, remains far behind. Their compassion is unquestionable but heir words fail to convey Truth.

Words have never been adequate. If the beloved had held the box to her bosom and danced, we would have called her insane; but if she had caught the meaning behind the box, she would have run to the seashore. Then she would have partaken of the joy of the dancing waves and the cool breeze. But this is possible only if after getting the message, she is willing to cast the casket aside and set out towards the place from where something was attempted to be conveyed.

Those that likewise cast the shastras aside and proceed towards the source of the shastras, find themselves one day, at the shores of the Ocean of Truth. But we are such fools -- we made a fanfare of the Geeta and are completely oblivious of the source from where Krishna sent the message of the Geeta. So also, have we done with the Bible and the Koran.

If Krishna and Christ, Mahavira and Buddha, happen to look at us, they will shed tears of anguish. They will say: "We tried to send them a whiff of the sea-breeze but they have clung to the words of our message and remained where they were!" If they had their way, they would snatch all the books and throw them into the sea. But even if Krishna were to snatch the Geeta away from us, we would catch him by the neck -- for what have we besides the Geeta?

Dostoevsky of Russia, wrote a book: The Brothers Karamazov. In that he says that after eighteen hundred years since his death, Jesus thought that the time was ripe

for him to re-visit the earth. There were churches erected in every village to preach his message; there were priests and monks with the cross dangling from their necks. Almost half the world had turned Christian! He was sure of a tumultuous welcome.

So one Sunday, Jesus descended into a village and stood under a tree. People were returning from the village church; the morning mass was over. They were surprised to see a Christ-like figure standing under the tree. Who is this man dressed like Jesus? He must be an actor, they thought. They gathered round him, full of curiosity and began to question him: "Your acting is perfect. You look exactly like Christ."

"But I AM Christ," said Jesus. They laughed aloud; one threw a stone, another a slipper and they all danced round him, calling him insane. One, out of pity, told him to go before the priest caught him.

"Your priest? He is my priest. Don't you recognize me? I am the one to whom you pray every morning."

"We shall worship you as you deserve, if you do not make yourself scarce quickly!" they told him.

Jesus in his compassion forgave them; perhaps they really did not recognize him, but the priest was bound to, for he sang his praises all day. Then along came the padre. The noisy crowd became silent as he approached. Then one by one, they touched his feet -- such is the world: it will stone God but it will prostrate before those who make business out of Him.

"This is blasphemy!" exclaimed Jesus.

"Keep quiet," said the people. "If the priest hears you, he will feel insulted." This drew the priest's attention. "Who is this rascal?" he asked, "Bring him to me."

"You too do not recognize me?" Jesus asked the priest, "And you wear my cross around your neck!"
But Jesus overlooked the fact that the cross he was hung on was made of wood, while the cross that hung round the priest's neck, was made of gold. Was ever a cross to hang a man by made of gold? And it is the man who is hung on the cross and not the cross on the man!
"This man looks like Satan himself!" proclaimed the priest, "Our Jesus came to earth but once. There is no need for him to come again. Now we are here to look after his work."
So Jesus was locked up in the attic of the church, He was shocked! This was the same kind of treatment he had received eighteen hundred years ago. "Will I be crucified again?" He wondered.
The priest came to visit him in the middle of the night. He fell at his feet and begged forgiveness. "I recognized you alright, Oh Glorious One! But we are constrained to deny you in the market-place. You need not take the trouble of coming again. We are carrying out your work with all sincerity. Business is good, and if you come there is bound to be confusion. We have barely got things going smoothly and you come again! Please understand, we cannot acknowledge you in public. Not only that, we might have to resort to the same tactics to disown you, as we did eighteen hundred years ago. Pleas forgive us; we are helpless."
The same will be the fate of Krishna or Mahavir or Mohammed, if they chose to come again We little realize that those whose words we cling to, have clearly warned us not to; for Truth is not in words. Truth is present in the "word-less" silence, where all thoughts are absent.

Truth will not be in my words, nor in the words of anybody else. Then why do I speak? -- to snatch your words away from you. If my words, like the thorn. can pick out the words from within you, I will have attained my end. Then you will be freed from my words as well as the words within. Then the mind, devoid of words, is ready to set out towards Truth. It is a matter of great regret, that instead of grasping the essence of the message of those who come to liberate us, we merely catch hold of their persons.

Buddha had forbidden his disciples from making his statue, but today his statues outnumber those of anyone else; In fact the Urdu word for "statue" is derived from the word Buddha and it has come to mean any statue. There are Buddha idols to the tune often thousand in a single temple n China... and Buddha bad warned: "Do not worship me!" We are strange people! We catch the one who says "Do not hold on to me" -- catch him all the more firmly, lest he slips away! The more we like a person, the more we tend to cling to him for fear of losing him. This tendency has made slaves out of us. If we lose our hold on the old ones, we find new ones to hold on to. If Mahavir and Krishna, Buddha and Rama are getting out of hand we create a Gandhi and begin to cling to him: we must have someone or the other to cling on to. We do not want to stand on our own two feet. I wish to declare that only that person is qualified to call himself a man who, discarding others, stands on his own feet.

Only he can take hold of himself who casts aside all outside help. Remember: he who clings to others has no faith in himself. Because he finds himself weak, he tries to derive strength from others. Lack of faith in one's self, becomes

faith in others. He who has faith in himself, places his faith nowhere else. The irony of it all is: he who cannot hold on to himself, how can be hold on to another7 How can he sustain another. when he has no power over himself?
Faith in one's self is religion, and not faith in others. God has given to each person all that he has given to everybody. Each one of us has that in him which has manifested itself in others -- some Ram, some Buddha, some Mahavir, some Gandhi. What becomes manifest is present in seed within all. But when I say "leave them," I have no enmity towards their person. How can there be? Such wonderful people -- what can I have against their person? What reason do I have to find fault with them? All I mean is: as long as you hold on to their person, you will never be able to find yourself; and he who fails to find himself, is disqualified to enter the temple of God.
Some other friends have asked me: "Why do you speak against Gandhi?"
What reason could I have to speak against Gandhi? Men like Gandhi, come to this earth after thousands of years of penance. But I find you all running after the man and not his message! So I am constrained to speak against him; and against Buddha, Christ and Mahavir for the same reason. Not only do I have to speak against Gandhi but I have to be harsh towards him; for I find that a new idol is taking, shape and people are already clinging onto it. Before the old idols lose their hold, new ones are formed and man's slavery remains the same. Freed from karma, he clings to Buddha; freed from Buddha, he clings to Christ. He catches hold of the new before he lets go of his hold on the old. It never happens that he leaves all and relies on himself. He

who dares to leave all and stand on his own two feet, endears himself to God.

A Muslim fakir dreamt one night that he had gone to heaven -- people go to heaven only in dreams; for reality as they know it, is akin to hell. He found the streets of heaven crowded. On inquiring, he was told it was God's birthday. He praised his good fortune, at last the thirst of his eyes will be quenched, for he will see God Himself! He waited on the roadside with some others.

Soon there came a magnificent person riding on a horse, with thousands of attendants. The fakir whispered to the man next to him "Is that the Lord?"

"Oh no!" said the man, "This is Hazrat Mohammed!" The procession passed only to be followed by another. "Is this God?" asked the fakir of his neighbour, pointing at the central figure.

"No," came the answer, "this is Ram and his entourage." Then followed Krishna and Christ, Buddha and Confucius and many such luminaries, all with their respective retinues. It was well past midnight and the crowd had already thinned out. "When will God come?" the fakir wondered. The streets were deserted except for him and all the fanfare was over.

Then an old man came riding alone -- not a soul with him! The fakir eyed him curiously, "Who could this character be, riding all by himself?" he wondered. Then it came to him! This must be God, for no one is more lonely than Him in the whole wide Universe. He went up to him and asked: "Sir, Are you God and if you are, tell me why are you alone? The others had crowds following them."

At this God's eyes filled with tears and He said. "All the people were divided between them. Not a single one remained for me. Some went with Rama and some with Krishna and some with someone else. No one is with me, for only he can be with me who is with no one else."
The fakir got up with a start. He looked around and found himself on the floor of his hut. He went around telling everyone of this strange dream. "God is alone! God is alone!" he went about wailing. "How is that possible?" he asked one and all. He asked me too and I told him: "Your dream was true. There is no one lonelier than God!"
The Hindu cannot be with God, nor can the Jain nor the Christian be with Him. He who is nothing, who has no epithets, who is nobody's follower or disciple who is absolutely alone -- he alone can merge with the "Totally Alone," who is God. The door that leads to God opens in complete alone-ness. God is not in the least concerned with crowds. When we are Hindus, we are a part of one particular crowd; when we follow Rama, we are a part of one particular crowd -- and so we follow our own mental projections. Truth has nothing to do with this. And when I say: "Leave them," I do not mean that Rama is a useless person. He can be very useful, provided we do not cling to his person. By "leaving" I mean keep your hands free. The hands are tied as long as they hold anybody's feet; and tied hands cannot reach out to God. When the hands are completely empty, God is attained.
I will explain with yet another story: One day, Krishna sat town to dine and Rukmini, his queen, was fanning him as he ate. Suddenly, he pushed aside his plate and ran to the door. Rukmini called after him to finish his meal but he did

not heed her and ran out to the gate. But then he hesitated and turned back looking sad, and resumed his meals. "What was the matter?" asked Rukmini.
"It was a grave situation," said Krishna. "One of my beloveds was passing through a village. People were stoning him and blood trickled down his face. The crowd surrounded him, hurling stones and abuses but he stood quiet and smiling. It was incumbent on me to go to his aid."
"Then why did you come back?" asked Rukmini.
"By the time I reached the gate, he needed me no more. He had picked up a stone in his defence As long as he was absolutely defenceless, and was absolutely alone, he needed me. His entire being drew me towards him like a magnet but now he is helpless no more. He has taken the help of a stone."
How far this story is true I cannot tell, and it matters little, but one thing I know and I wish to tell you too: as long as your hands are full, your mind is full; as long as you lean on anything for support, you cannot hope to attain the Divine help. God's support is attained only when one is completely helpless. But we always tend to lean on something or the other and that very support becomes an obstruction. So when I say: "Leave everything!" I exhort you to be totally helpless. One has to forsake all scriptures, all gurus, all heroes and abandon all that we cling on to. Please do not misunderstand me. My words are very much misunderstood. When I tell you to renounce Gandhi -- people think I am Gandhi's enemy. I am telling you to leave not only Gandhi but anybody you have taken hold of. If anyone tries to hold on to me, I should tell him to forsake me in the same manner. I ask you to be non-aligned; your

hands should be free of everything. Wonderful is the moment when a man casts all aside and steps out. Then what occurs in his life is beyond our imagination. Then for the first time God enters his life; then for the first time he hears the foot-falls of Truth. Therefore I say: "Leave all else!"

One friend has asked: "If Truth cannot be conveyed by words, and if it cannot be written in scriptures, then what other means is there for its communication?"

There is no way of imparting Truth through words, nor is there any need. It is needed only to be known and more than knowing, BECOMING Truth is more essential. The question of transmission does not arise. To know is, and to experience it, is the question. Where is the sense in related truth?

There was a fakir, Sheikh Farid. In the course of his pilgrimage he happened to pass by Kashi, where Kabir resided. His companions urged him to visit Kabir. "Let us spend a day or two at the Sage's ashram," they implored him. "We shall gain immensely from your talk with him. This is a God-given opportunity and we do not want to miss it."

"As you wish," said Farid. "We shall visit Kabir but about the talk, I cannot promise."

"Won't you talk to him?" they asked with surprise.

"There is no need to talk to Kabir," he said. "Kabir knows and I know -- what small we talk about?"

Now Kabir's companions too, were urging him to meet Farid.

"We all have a lot to gain, when the two of you converse It will be a rare treat!"

"That is going to be difficult," said Kabir. ' I shall call him if you wish. We will meet each other, embrace each other, cry together, but we shall not speak.

They still insisted however, for they were sure this could not be. When Kabir saw that they were adamant, he invited Farid to the ashram. On the appointed day Kabir went to the outskirts of the village to welcome him. The two met; and they embraced. For a long time they clasped each other, tears streaming down their eyes. They sat together under a tree. The disciples waited eagerly to catch every word that was spoken. But there was no talk. A full day passed, then the next and then the time came to say good-bye. The disciples became restless. They implored them to talk but they merely looked at each other and laughed. Then they parted.

Kabir's disciples demanded an explanation and Farid's disciples did the same. "Why did you not speak?" they demanded.

"What could we speak about?" said Kabir. "What is known cannot be expressed! And nothing remains to be said, before one who already knows."

And Farid told his disciples: "The one who spoke, would have proved himself a fool "

But the question arises: Why did these two not speak? Truth can only be known, never spoken. But the Sheikh spoke among others and so did Kabir! Then of what did they speak if Truth cannot be spoken? They spoke in order to convey the message that Truth cannot be spoken by, nor derived from others. They wanted to convey this negative thought that truth can he attained, can be sought -- but it can never be obtained from someone. If their talk could

implant just this idea into a person's mind; If this much is understood, that this is an individual quest in which there are no partners, then perhaps he may set out on this path -- for then he will have grasped the hint.

But we are such foolish people that if a person points out the moon to us, we will immediately catch hold of his finger and begin to worship it as the moon! All remonstrations will fall on deaf ears, for we refuse to see that it is only a finger and that the moon is far away. We will still maintain blindly that that is the moon.

There is a temple in Japan, where there is an idol of a finger instead of the usual idol and Buddha's words are inscribed underneath: "I point out the moon to you with my finger and you turn round and worship me!"

We too do nothing but worship fingers. Words and scriptures are mere pointers towards that which has no words, no scriptures and no pointers. We however, are like the man who walks along the trunk road and coming upon the mile-stone, which says: "Junagadh -- 50 Miles, " sits down besides the stone, convinced that he has reached his destination. He refuses to believe that the stone, in fact, conveys that Junagadh is miles away and that many such mile-stones are to be reached and crossed until the final stone, which says: "Junagadh -- O Mile," is reached. That mile-stone is the destination which says: "Zero miles"; that scripture which says: "Zero -- Naught," is the authentic religious scripture. We have to proceed further and further and yet further, leaving all words as we go along, until we come to the point from where there is no further to proceed there is only the void. All words point towards this void, this emptiness.

Void means contemplation; void is samadhi. To be in the void means: leaving everything to become "just nothing." Then everything is attained from that nothing. The void is the door to the Absolute. Words are barriers -- silence is the way. Those that stop at words break their heads against the wall and perish, but those who go through emptiness, gain entrance there.

Have you ever pondered on the fact that the door in your house is an empty space, while the walls are solid structures? The door is an emptiness and actually means: where there is nothing -- no obstruction. And this is the only opening in the walls that allows entry and exit, to and from the house. Thus this empty space, the door, is the most important part of the house. Without it the house becomes useless.

You fill water in a vessel -- where does the water fill? In the empty space of the vessel of course. So the vessel actually comprises of the empty space, whereas the walls of the vessel merely surround the empty space within. When you buy a water-pot from the market, you actually buy the empty space within its walls, for it is there that the water is stored. So the empty space within the pot is the important part of the pot; the empty space within, the the door is important part of the house; so also the space within is of prime importance.

In a mind filled with words, there are walls; in its silence there is the door. But we fill our minds with words, words and more words; and we think we are wiser for them! We little realize the poverty of knowledge. Those who "know" have found the door of silence and have broken the walls of words. Man "knows" only when he leaves words and never

when he holds on to them. This seems contradictory but nonetheless true.

When Buddha became enlightened, people asked him what he had attained. Buddha replied: "I have gained what I already possessed! I have become aware of my possessions within."

"What did you do to attain them?" they asked.

"As long as I did anything, I did not attain. As soon as I left all doing, it was attained."

"You talk in converse terms!"

"As long as I tried to do something, the mind was restless; for restlessness is caused by the act of doing. As soon as all doing stopped, the mind became tranquil, and that revealed itself which was always within."

Words are turmoil; as long as they whirl within, the mind is in a state of unrest. When they no longer roll within, when all recitations of the Geeta and the Koran cease; when no words of Mahavir and Buddha, reverberate within; when all becomes still and silent within -- then in that moment, that reveals itself which was forever there and never lost.

That is truth, our real Being. But we are ignorant of it. We have gathered layers of words around it -- like the onion, each layer when peeled, reveals another and this in its turn reveals yet another, till in the end, nothing remains. Such are the layers within the mind -- thousands of layers gathered over numerous lives. Start to peel them, one by one; keep on till all of them are removed. Then what will be left behind? Nothing but the void; and this void, this emptiness, is the Truth which abides.

If we remove the objects in a house, the furniture, the Portraits, the calendars, the utensils etc., something still

remains behind which cannot be removed -- the emptiness. This emptiness is the actual house -- "The house." Then this empty house we fill with so many things that it becomes difficult to enter it!

The mind too, is a house that we fill with word.., so much so that it is impossible to go within. Have you ever tried going within? You will always encounter words and more words like the cacophony of a market-place, which is always filled with people! If you throw out all these words from within, "you" still remain, for you are not words -- you are something else. This something else, that still stands within, is the Atman (Soul). He who knows the Atman realizes Truth; and he who knows his own inscape, knows the inscape of all; and he who has once experienced Truth, begins to see it in all things, at all times.

Therefore I say not words, not scriptures -- but silence is the door. And hence the stress on giving up everything, for then that which cannot be given up by any means, is our very Self. That which can be given up is not your Self; that which can be added unto you is also not your Self; neither is that your Self, which can be taken away from you. That which cannot be added unto me or taken away from mc is my intrinsic self. To be in one's intrinsic self is another name for Truth. To that end, do I insist that you leave all scriptures -- all! What can I have against shastras -- against books? My war is only against Man filling himself with these; for a man so filled is deprived of the knowledge of that which he is, and so remains unacquainted with his very being.

There was a Japanese fakir by the name of Bokozu. Once a university professor came to visit him. He was a learned

man, well versed in the scriptures. He had travelled a long way in the hot sun to meet this fakir. He entered the hut and after paying his respects to Bokozu, he wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "Sir?" he addressed Bokozu, "From you I have come to learn what is truth."
"Where was the need to come all this way in the hot sun to know what truth is?" asked Bokozu. "If truth is, it will be in your house too. If not, it will not be here also. What makes you come to me? Have I taken a contract to supply truth? If you could not see truth where you were, you will not be able to see it here also."
If a blind man walks a thousand miles to ask of another man where light is, he will tell him: "If you had eyes, light was there also where you came from. Without eyes, light will not be, no matter where you go." Light is wherever eyes are -- else there is nothing but darkness."
The fakir told the professor, "If you were capable of seeing truth, there was no need to come here. The very fact that you have come to ask me, shows that you do not have eyes. What can I do? I can only suggest that perhaps the knowledge you have gathered has made you blind. There is no greater ignorance in the world than knowing too much.
"Anyhow, you rest awhile if you are tired. I shall make some tea and then we shall talk. The tea will alleviate your fatigue and perhaps also provide the answer to your question."
"How can a cup of tea provide an answer to truth? I feel I have come to the wrong place. This man is insane; and I have travelled in vain!" he thought to himself.
As he got up to leave Bokozu said: "Don't be hasty. Have a cup of tea before you leave."

The professor was tired so he sat down again; but as for finding an answer to his question, he had given up all hope. What could be expected of a man who connects the drinking of tea with the quest of truth?

The fakir came with the tea. He handed an empty cup and saucer to the professor and began to pour the tea. The cup filled and so did the saucer but still the fakir kept on pouring. When it came near to spilling over, the professor cried out: "Stop please! There is no space more for Q single drop!"

"Can you see that there is no space for another drop in your cup?" asked the fakir, "And you also see that if you pour more, it will spill over?" The professor was like the full cup -- filled with words, very near spilling over.

How does a person become insane? When so many thoughts take possession of his mind that he cannot contain them, they start to overflow. Then he keeps talking as he goes along the road, catches people by force and talks to them He talks in sleep, and he talks to himself endlessly. When there is a deluge of words, insanity results.

In fact, we are all insane to a certain degree, for within the head, there is perpetual conversation. There is no rest for the mind. There is only a difference of proportion of madness between an average man and a mad man; the quality of madness is the same. A slight increase in the ratio and we too, would be mad.

We can carry out a small experiment: Lock yourself up in a room with a paper and pen and write down, sincerely, truthfully, all the thoughts that come to your mind. When you read these thoughts you will not have the courage to show that paper even to one who is nearest to you. You,

yourself, will be aghast to know what is happening in your mind.

Within ten minutes, we will come to know the disordered condition of our mind. Yet, somehow, we have taken hold of ourselves to perform our normal functions. We are the insane, who have somehow sustained our insanity; who have somehow subdued our lunacy. If ever the words within burst out, you shall know the quality and state of our mind.

Give a man a drink. He who was talking of God just a little while ago, will start to abuse Him in the filthiest terms. Why is this so? Is there a chemistry in alcohol that changes God's name into abuses? Alcohol has only brought to the surface what was already within. It broke the bastions of his personality. Till then his defence was perfect -- abuses flowed within while there was nothing but God's name on his lips; but now the limbs became limp and the mind was so dazed that he had no strength to control himself, and the truth came out!

A respectable person is invariably unrespectable within. The mind is in near chaotic condition with such a mad rush of thoughts, and this over-crowding prevents the entry of truth within the mind. The cup we can see over-filling, but do we realize that the mind is over-filled from many lives past? Yet we are busy, loading thought upon thought, and all this excess causes the mind to be diseased and unhealthy, breaking all its connections with Truth.

If a relationship is to be established with Truth, this crowd of thoughts has to be thrown out. We must be freed from the mob of words. But we argue that words give knowledge. Then how is one to be free from them? When

we realize that words lead to false knowledge and not the authentic knowledge, then alone, we shall be able to throw away words. The day words are cast out a revolution takes place within -- an "explosion" and a new world comes into being -- a new door opens!

I shall make it more explicit with a story: The prime minister of an ancient kingdom died. It was a custom in that land to choose the wisest man in the country for that post. To this end, many were examined and three were chosen. They were sent to the capital for the final test.

When they arrived in the city, they were tense and worried, wondering what the final test would be -- like any student. They asked whoever they met if they could tell them what the test was going to be; and were surprised to hear that everyone knew. The king had built a special room that was fitted with a lock that opened only with a mathematical solution. They would be kept within this room, and the first to come out, would become the prime minister.

Two from among them were very worried, but the third made straight for his room and went to bed. The other two thought; "Maybe he has already given up!" These two ran to the shops and bought all books that contained information on locks, and sat poring over them the whole night. The poor fellows! They knew everything about everything but locks; for they were neither thieves nor locksmiths, nor engineers, nor politicians. They were in a fix! They made inquiries from locksmiths and mathematicians. They asked engineers; they read all night for it was a question of their future; and the sacrifice of one night's sleep was not too great.

Our students do the same, little realizing that they tire and confuse the mind in order to know all. So much so, that if they were to be asked the next morning: "What is two and two?" they will hesitate to answer. The mind is filled with so many solutions that the simplest answers are forgotten.
The third contestant got up refreshed after a good night's rest. He washed his face, got ready and left for the palace with the others. The rumours were correct. The king took them to the house where the much-talked of lock was, and explained: "This lock opens with a mathematical figure. He who opens it first becomes my prime minister. I shall wait outside."
The three men entered the room, and the door was closed. The one who had slept all night went into a corner, and sat with his eyes closed. The other two laughed: "Can locks be opened by closing the eyes?" They jeered. They dismissed him for a stupid fellow, and plunged into their work. They brought out the books they had smuggled in. and began to pore over them. Let not the students of today think that people of old were not cunning and dishonest. Dishonesty is an ancient attribute of men -- older than the Vedas. Books have changed but not the art of cheating.
As soon as the doors closed, they drew out their books. The third man sat for about half an hour. Then he walked silently up to the door. The others were too busy to notice him. When he reached the door, he tried the lock. Lo, it was open! All he had to do was to walk out! The king came in and told the other two to fold up their books. He had chosen his prime minister.
"The man who was to come out, has come out!" he said.
"But how could he? He had done nothing!"

"There was nothing to be done," said the king. "The lock was merely hung, and not fastened. I had gathered that the most intelligent of you will not first inspect whether the lock was really locked."

Before solving a problem, is it not necessary to first find out whether the problem actually exists? If it exists, it needs to be solved but if it does not, how can it be solved? This man demonstrated his wisdom. He first set out to know whether the problem existed. That is the first sign of an intelligent man.

Then they questioned the man how he came to the conclusion that the door was not locked. He said: "I did not do anything for I knew I could do nothing in the matter with the knowledge at my command. Whatever I know has not the remotest connection with the problem at hand. Since all my knowledge was useless, I thought to myself: "What should I do '" Then it came to me that I should forget about my knowledge, sit in silence, and see if an answer would come from within. I knew the more I wracked my brains, the more restless I would become, and the more difficult the solution would be. The question is new, but my answers are all old. So I chose to leave all old solutions and sat quietly and watch whether any guidance came from within.

"And as I became totally silent within, an inner voice spoke 'Go inspect the door, it is not closed.' I got up, went up to the door and tried the lock -- it was not fastened! I did nothing to open the door. When I stopped all search, the answer came -- the answer of God! You were busy finding your own answers, and so were deprived of His. I left

everything and just waited -- waited to see what happens -- and the answer came!"

If anyone waits sincerely for the answer, he has to discard all the noise and tumult without and within, for as long as these exist, it cannot be heard.

Those who have heard the voice of God, are the people who have discarded their own voice. Those who have known the Truth of God, are people who have cast out all acquired knowledge from within them. Those that have opened the book of God, have closed all man-made books; and only those who have not followed another man have been able to look upwards to God.

His door lies in silence, emptiness, and tranquillity; and these are ever present within us. Perhaps they do knock at our door; call out to us every moment, but we are never present to hear them! We are so preoccupied with our own thoughts that their gentle voice is drowned. We are so involved in our petty talk that it is well-nigh impossible to trace this voice.

Therefore I stress, again and again: "Leave all words and become "word-less"! Try this out once and see what happens. Too long have you tarried in words. Be in silence and see what happens. This being in the "no-word state," is what i call "meditation."

I shall explain in short about meditation. Then we shall sit in meditation for ten minutes and then part for the day. Whatsoever I have said will not be grasped by you by my mere saying but it is possible that my words cause a thought to spark within you, and your thirst awakens! Be silent for ten minutes and see. Think of that man who sat in the king's room quiet, empty. What did this man do then7

He merely let go of his thoughts and busied himself in becoming silent. When the silence was complete, the answer came. This answer was not his. It was an answer from above -- an answer from his inner-most being; an answer from God. We shall also try to be silent and tranquil for ten minutes. There is no difficulty in th s. It only may seem difficult because we have never tried before; but that which was never done, can be done now. That which cannot be performed today, can be mastered tomorrow, for possibilities are always natural and easy. With a slight effort, possibility turns into reality.

What shall we do for these ten minutes? Look around -- the night is silent. The trees and the wind, the stars and the moon are all one with this silence. Come, let us also be silent along with them. It will be difficult for the kaleidoscope of words will keep revolving within and the thoughts will go on -- "when will these ten minutes end?" It will urge you to open your eyes and see what the other person is doing. The shallow, paltry, turbid mind will waste these precious moments in such trivialities and refuse to be silent. But it can be silenced, if we are wakeful and alert in our experiment.

What shall we do that it becomes quiet? There is only one way and no other. That way is the development of the "Witness-state." A person who sits for ten minutes with this witness-attitude, can become silent. There is this night all around us; there are people all around us. A child may cry; a bird may call out; a car may pass on the road; the breeze might rustle he leaves of the trees -- something or the other will keep happening all around.

If for ten minutes you decide to he a witness only -- a mere Spectator. an onlooker -- if you say to yourself: "I shall only watch, silently, experience all that is going on without any effort on my part -- as a man would watch the river flow by, or the clouds passing in the sky, or a group of birds, flying back to their nests! or as a man would witness the market babble with its shops and buyers! or as he would see a cinema show when he just watches, doing absolutely nothing. Then a strange happening takes place... a silence begins to pervade within -- words begin to fade. So for ten minutes, we shall sit and carry out this witness experiment. There are one or two small rules for this experiment.

The first thing is: Leave the body absolutely relaxed -- so limp, as if it were lifeless. There should be no tension, no strain in any part of the body.

The second is: Close the eyes, naturally, effortlessly by lowering the eye lids gently and slowly.

The lights will be put off. The mellow light of the moon will be enough, and in its light we shall sit with our eyes closed for ten minutes -- only ten minutes -- in the witness-attitude. We shall do just nothing, as we would in a cinema house. We shall hear whatever falls on our ears, we shall feel whatever is felt from outside; we shall witness the thoughts within. We shall only watch -- whatever happens within, let it happen.

Ten minutes of this silent witnessing and we will be amazed at the equal amount of peace and quiet that is born within. If the within becomes silent and empty for even a moment, the first step is taken in a completely new world. If someone finds this interesting, and feels something can be achieved, let him practise this silence every night for ten

minutes before going to bed. The accrual of ten minutes every day opens a door within, and in three months time will give an inkling of a completely new and wonderful world. He will then become acquainted with an altogether new person within himself, one whom he had never known before.

The Beginning of the Beginning

Chapter #4

Chapter title: From Dreams Towards Truth

27 February 1969 am in

I have just been to the Girnar mountains, where the temples glisten in the morning sun. Seeing these temples, it occurred to me: The soul too has such high peaks where temples shine even brighter; for the Lord's light is more keen and intense than the Sun's light. But we are such; we lose ourselves in the temples outside and get no hint of the temples within. We might spend a whole life climbing mountains, unaware of the heights of our own consciousness. As there are tracks that lead to the Girnar peaks, so there are paths leading to the peaks of consciousness.

There is a difference however, in these two paths. In the realm of consciousness no foot-prints are left behind. Just as the birds that fly in the air leave ho trail behind -- each bird flying its own path, so also in the path of Truth there are no cut and hewn roads. Each one must carve his own path, which takes shape as he walks along. There is no

definite direction that one can follow. If the paths were ready-made, all we had to do was to follow one of them and reach the top. But there are no paths. As man walks, his foot-steps get erased behind him and are lost forever. Though each one has to make his own path, a few hints can be given in connection with them. In this last discourse, we shall talk about these pointers.

We have already discussed the first two rules. Today, we shall talk on the third rule. This third rule is somewhat symbolic. The first fact to be understood about this rule is that life, as we normally take it to be, is not real; and as long as we consider it to be real, our eyes will never turn in the direction of Truth.

Those who wish to set out in quest of Truth, have perforce to know that this life is no more than a dream -- this is the first tip. This long journey from birth to death -- is it a reality or a dream? We shall have to ponder on this. Normally we take it as real but that is because we have never thought much on it. When we dream at night, the dream appears real. It never occurs to us while dreaming, that what we are experiencing is not true. Dreams look very real, while dreaming. How many times do we dream? All through life we dream but never has the unreality of the dream been experienced or known during the dream its falsity never comes to our mind. Those who have awakened to greater truths, claim that the world we see with open eyes is also no more than a dream.

A king's one and only son lay on his death-bed. The doctors had given up hope -- death was lurking close, perhaps it would come that very night. The king and the queen kept vigil by his bed-side. When it was almost dawn, the king

fell asleep on his chair. In his sleep was forgotten the ailing son, the large kingdom, the magnificent palace.

And he dreamt: He dreamt that he was the master of the whole world. He had twelve sons -- healthy, handsome, strapping youths. His palaces were made of gold with steps inlaid with precious stones. He could not be happier. And then -- all of a sudden, the twelve sons died. His queen began to wail and he was shaken out of sleep. Everything was lost -- the mighty kingdom, the golden palaces, the robust sons -- all vanished

He found the queen weeping but there was not a tear in his eye. He burst out laughing. The queen was shocked. "Your only son is dead and you laugh!" she cried.

"There is a reason for it" he told her. "A moment ago I ha& twelve sons, a palace of gold, and a vast kingdom. Your cries destroyed them all! And this son, whose very existence I had t forgotten in my dream, along with you and the palace, is now dead. As long as the twelve existed, this one was lost to memory and now that I see this one, the twelve are lost to me. Now for whom shall I cry? This one or the other twelve? And a thought comes to me: perhaps both belong to the dream-world. One dream I dreamt with my eyes closed, the other with my eyes opened. Each was forgotten when the other existed."

There are dreams we see with our eyes opened, and there are dreams we see with our eyes closed. Both are dreams.

Chwang Tse was a fakir of China. He was always seen laughing, never sad. One day his friends found him sitting in his hut, looking very sad. His friends were surprised. "We have always seen you laughing, no matter what the problem. What is it that disturbs you today?"

"It is a problem I cannot solve," said Chwang Tse.
"But there Was never a problem you could not solve for us. This must be a special problem that worries a person like you. Please tell us about it," they begged.
"I will," said Chwang Tse. " But you will not be able to solve it and I feel I shall never never find an answer to it: Last night, I dreamt that I was a butterfly in a garden. I saw myself flitting from one flower to another!"
"What is so difficult about that?" they asked. "This is nothing new. Man becomes a lot of things in dreams!"
"That is all right," said Chwang Tse. "But when I got up in the morning, the problem arose. A question confronted me: 'If a man called Chwang Tse could be a butterfly in a dream, could it be possible that now the butterfly is asleep and dreaming it is a man called Chwang Tse? I have been disturbed since morning. If a man can be a butterfly in a dream, a butterfly can also be a man in dreams. Now I cannot decide whether I am a man who dreams he is a butterfly, or I am a butterfly dreaming I am a mam Who is to decide?"
Chwang Tse is correct. What we see outside is also a dream with open eyes; for the outside world vanishes as soon as the eyes are closed. We are transported to a different world as soon as the eyes close; and the world we see with open eyes has no greater value than this.
You have lived your lives -- some for fifteen years and some for fifty. If you look back on the years gone by, the past events seem no more than a dream. It is at times, hard to believe those events ever took place! So what is the difference? On looking back on the events, the honour you received, the insults you bore -- did they happen in truth or

were they only a dream? At the time of death what difference does it make, which life was real, and which was not. How many people have lived before us on this earth? No one knows how many people are contained in the very ground beneath us! The whole world is one big cemetery, where millions and billions of people lived and died. What difference does it make today, whether they lived or not? When they existed, life must have looked very real to them also. Today nothing remains of them or their lives. All has turned to dust. A thousand years hence, other people will walk on our ashes. Today we sit here, tomorrow we too will be lost. So is the life that ultimately turns to dust, how much of reality can it hold? Of what worth is that which is ultimately lost?

This same Chwang Tse was once passing through a village. It was a dark night. As he came out of the village, and was crossing the shmashan, his foot knocked against a skull. If it had been somebody else, he would have kicked the skull out of the way and cursed it as an evil omen. But Chwang Tse picked it up, held it against his forehead and humbly addressed it thus:

"Please forgive me, for the night is dark and I could not see. It is my fault. I beg forgiveness." Now it was only the skull of some man and who knows how long it was since he had died. So Chwang Tse's friends were surprised.

"What are you doing? Are you out of your mind? Whose forgiveness do you seek?"

"It is only a matter of time," said Chwang Tse. "If this man were alive today, I would have had it!"

"But he is no longer alive!"

"You do not know that this is the shmashan of the rich. It is not in life alone that the rich keep away from the poor. Also in death, they keep their distance; therefore my concern."
"But he is no longer there so what is the difficulty?"
"I ask your pardon, but for many reasons I am going to keep this skull with me."
He carried the skull with him wherever he went. Every morning he Bot up and bowed before the skull, asking its forgiveness. His friends tried to dissuade him from this practice, fearing he might lose his head. Once was enough, but this daily ritual would surely tell on his mind! To their protests, Chwang Tzu would say: "I have my reasons. The very first reason is: it is a big man's skull!"
Chwang Tse was joking in this way to show them that all skulls turn to dust, whether of a rich man or poor. Dust makes no differentiation between them. And if big and small all turn to dust, then it is nothing more than a dream, to be big or small. If the dust reduces all dreams to naught, there is not a grain of truth in this "being big or small." It is all a part of a dream.
Chwang Tse explained to his friends: "I keep this skull with me so that I am always reminded of my own skull which also, if not today, tomorrow will lie in some shmashan. It too, will have to bear the kicks of some passer-by and I will not be able to do a thing about it. If this is what is going to happen ultimately, where is the need to be angry if someone's foot touches the head?"
Those who "know" say that which is to be, already is. If life is going to be extinct, it already is. If it is to turn to dust, it is dust already. Life is a dreams a short dream but it looks as if everything is real.

If we try to look deeper, we find that everything gets lost -- everything turns to dust. And what is the reason to accept the reality of that which turns to dust? We might defend ourselves by saying: "A dream lasts a few moments, whereas life is spread over a number of years."

If we were to look more deeply, we will find that in the vast expanse of the Universe a hundred years is a very infinitesimal space of time. It is four thousand million years since the earth came into being. It is six thousand million years since the sun was born; but the sun is comparatively a new member of the universe. There are stars so old in the universe, it is difficult to calculate how old they are. So in the passage of time, what meaning do a hundred years have? None whatsoever. A hundred years pass, and the moon and the sun are none the wiser for it; for to them it is no more than a tick of the clock. In terms of the infinite, a hundred years are but as a moment.

A miser died All through his life, he had stored away every single coin he had Before he died, he had read a book in which it was said that in heaven, the coin of the least denomination was worth millions of rupees. So when he died, he died with a wish to obtain one single coin of heaven. As soon as his eyes opened in heaven he began searching for the coin. The devatas asked him what he was up to.

"I am looking for a coin. I have heard that a coin of heaven is worth millions?"

"So it is," they said. "Wait a moment. We shall give you one." The man was pleased -- a moment would pass with the flicker of an eyelid. Soon the moments changed into hours and hours into days; and the days began to roll into

years, but no sign of the coin When will your moment end?" he called out in anguish.
"Don't you know?" came the answer! "Where one coin is worth millions one moment is made up of millions of years. Wait a moment and you will surely receive."
The scale of eternity is very vast. What significance can a hundred years have in this infinite scale? How endless is this scale It is difficult to tell when time started, or to know when it will end.
There is a story told by Bertrand Russell. The priest of a church slept one night, and dreamt that he had reached the door of heaven. But the door was so big, he could not see where it started or where it finished. He tried very hard to gauge its size but all he could see was a portion of the door. He knocked at the door, but what sound could his small hand make against that huge massive door? No sound came in that limitless silence. He knocked again but to no avail. He felt unhappy for he had always cherished the hope that God would be waiting with open arms when he reached heaven; for had he not worshipped him all his life? But here the door was closed and no matter how hard he knocked, there was no reply.
After a long time however, a small side window opened and someone looked out. The padre was frightened at what he saw: an eye brighter than a thousand suns looked out at him. He cried out in fright: "Oh Lord, I have seen you and that is enough! Now please go behind the window and talk to me, for I cannot stand the brightness of your gaze." But the voice behind the window said. "I am not God, I am a sentry here, but who are you? I cannot even see you. What

a small person you are! Wherefrom have you lost your way?"
A thousand eyes could not locate him, so small and insignificant was he.
The padre felt so insignificant!
"I was under the impression, I should meet God. This is only his footman!" he wailed to himself.
"Were you not informed of my coming?" asked the priest.
"This is the first time I have beheld a worm like you," said the door-keeper.
"Where are you coming from?"
"I am from the earth," said the priest.
"Never heard the name before!" he said. "Where is it, this earth of yours?"
The priest skipped a heart beat -- his breath nearly stopped! If he has not heard about the earth, he could not be knowing about the Christian religion or the Catholic Organization, much less of the Catholic church of his village. Then how could he ever know him, the priest of the church? Nevertheless, he tried to explain:
"There is a solar system and the earth is one of its planets." he said.
"Have you any idea of the number of suns there are?" asked the door-keeper.
Which sun are you talking about? What is the index number? If you can furnish the index number, perhaps we can locate this earth of yours."
"Number?" gasped the priest "But we know of only one sun!"
"It is difficult to place you in that case!" said the sentry. However, I shall try."

So worked up was the priest in his fright and confusion, that he woke up with a start. He was soaked in perspiration! For the first time, he realized that the earth was of no consequence in the scheme of the vast universe.

This earth is so small but it appears so big to us! The sun is sixty thousand times as big as the earth, but ;n the galaxy of stars, it is a small body. The stars in the sky are much bigger than the sun. They appear small because of their distance from us. The sun's rays take ten minutes to reach the earth, even though they travel at the speed of a hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second. The sun is far away, yet not so far away when we know that the next nearest star takes four years to send its rays to the earth; and these rays travel at the same speed as the sun's. There are other stars, whose rays take a hundred years, two hundred years, a thousand, a hundred-thousand years to reach the earth. There are stars, which were formed four hundred thousand years before the earth, whose rays have yet not reached the earth. And there are stars yet, whose rays will never reach the earth -- so say the scientists.

In such an infinite vista, where does the earth stand? And where do we stand vis-a-vis the universe -- we, who are but a tiny speck compared to the world? But we attach a lot of value to ourselves; and the more value we attach to our little selves, the more restless we become; and the more we suffer and the possibility of realizing Truth gets less and less.

He who is tranquil and filled with peace, can realize Truth. The first rule for obtaining tranquillity is not to consider that life which we lead, as real. Attach no more importance to it than you would to a dream. The moment life begins to

appear as a dream, the mind becomes quiet. Until then, it is impossible for we attach such importance to trivial things. We take even dreams to be real and suffer on account of them. A man sees a ghost in his dream and gets up with a fright, his chest pounding; his sleep is broken, the dream is no more, yet it has seemed so real that the heart beats faster!

We are such, we even get carried away by theatrical performances. You will see many people wiping their eyes in cinema-houses; whereas on the screen there is nothing but the p1ay of electricity. Knowing full well that it is the current of electricity forming pictures on a blank screen, we yet laugh or cry or get frightened with the different scenes! The drama becomes a reality, whereas actually, the first rule in the quest of Truth is to consider as play, what we take to be a reality in life. Then only does Truth reveal itself.

There was a great thinker in Bengal by the name of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. He went to see a play. In the play, the hero is after the heroine. He does everything to harass and trouble her. Then one day, in the dead of night, he jumps into her bedroom and catches hold of her. Vidyasagar could bear it no longer. He jumped on to the stage, took out his shoe and beat up the hero -- completely forgetting it was a play on the stage! Everybody was shocked but the hero took the shoe and holding it to his chest, bowed reverently to Vidyasagar. He turned to the audience and said: "Never have I received so great an honour. That anyone should be so carried away by my acting and that too, a great thinker like Vidyasagar! It is the

biggest award I have ever received. I shall always prize this shoe."
Vidyasagar felt ashamed. He went quietly back to his seat. Later on, he told his friends that the play appeared so real that he completely forgot it was a drama!
If a play looks real, man gets disturbed but if life appears a play, man becomes tranquil. Where is the need to be agitated by a dream? Then if poverty comes, it is a dream; even riches are a dream. Then sickness and health, honour and dishonour, are all dreams. As this truth becomes clearer to us, the mind starts to get restful. Truth is hidden because of our restlessness.
A young fakir used to stay in a small village in Japan. He was a handsome youth who was well-known for his wisdom. Everyone in the village respected him. All of a sudden one day, the village turned against him. They fell on his hut and tore it to pieces and set fire to his belongings. When he asked them the reason for their fury, they flung a child into his arms and said:" You ask the reason? This is it! The mother of the child named you as its father. It was a mistake on our part to have allowed you to stay in our village. That you are such a libertine, we least suspected! Take this child; it is yours."
"Is it so?" he asked and at once started to soothe the child. "If you say so, it must be so."
The people let loose a fresh volley of abuse and left for their homes.
At mid-day, with the child in his arms, the fakir set out to the village to beg for alms. He went from house to house, the little child crying with hunger. Never before had a fakir ever begged in this manner! Wherever he went the doors

were closed on his face. People gathered round him. They taunted and reviled him and threw stones at him. Yet the fakir went from door to door, protecting the child from the mob's fury.

At last he came to the door of the child's mother: "In the name of God, give a little milk for this hungry child. Do not give me anything, I do not complain. It may be my fault but what is the fault of this poor child?"

The crowd stood at the door, eager with curiosity The giri heard all this and her heart was filled with remorse. She went and caught her father's feet and owned up to her guilt. In order to save her lover, she had named the fakir, whom she had never seen in her life. She had thought that at the most, the village people and her father would do no more than hurl a few abuses at the fakir; she never imagined things would come to such a pass! She asked for her father's forgiveness. The father was shocked! He ran out of the house and fell at the fakir's feet, begging his mercy. He took the child away from his hands. When the fakir asked what now was the matter, the father sobbed and said: "It is a sin we have committed! I humbly beg your forgiveness. This child is not yours."

"Is that so?" was all that the fakir said "In the morning you said it was mine; now you say it is not mine. So it is not mine?" The people who had gathered round him said: "What foolishness is this? If the child is not yours, why did you not say so in the morning?"

"What difference does it make?" said the fakir. "In this world of dreams what does it matter whether the child is mine or somebody else's? It must be somebody's; and since you all came here and said it was mine, I did not object; for

it makes no difference to me. You had already set fire to one hut, and abused one man. If I had denied this child, you would have gone and set fire to yet another hut and beat up yet another man. How would that have affected the matter?"

"But do you not care for your honour, your reputation?" they asked.

"The day I realized life to be no more than a dream, everything became equal. Honour and dishonour are the same to me. And what is the difference when all is a dream? If it were otherwise, it would have made a difference."

Napoleon lost the war and was exiled to the isle of St. Helena. A great emperor, who had never known defeat, had lost to his enemies and was now held prisoner on this small island. He went for a walk in the mornings with his doctor. One morning, as they were walking along the narrow track at the edge of a field, a peasant woman came walking towards them from the opposite direction. The doctor called out to her to get out of Napoleon's way, but Napoleon held him back and said: "Those days are over my friend, when people stepped back for the great Napoleon. Now it is my turn to step back -- even to a peasant woman."

Napoleon was wise. Napoleon was the same in defeat as in victory realizing how changeable life is When one begins understand this dream quality the mind begins to be restful. Then where is the difference in victory and defeat? Then victory, defeat; honour, dishonour; life and death are all the same. This is the peace, the track, that leads to the heights of Truth.

Through the path of tranquillity, man reaches Truth and only those can walk this path, to whom life appears to be a dream. Those to whom life is still a substantial truth, cannot walk this path of peace. This is one thing. The next now is: How does the man, to whom life becomes illusory, live? What rules will guide him? What do we do with dreams? We merely see them -- that is all! We cannot do anything to them. So a man to whom all life is a fantasy, will become a mere spectator, a witness. He will just observe life. He will see it as it is and do nothing but observe,

Dreams are our ardent desires, whereas the witness-state, is the evolvement. Dreams are the base but the Witness is the mansion that is constructed over it. To know life as a dream is to be an observer. Then when the person is no more than a spectator, a revolution takes place within him. This is the Spiritual Revolution, and this is not attained by reading the scriptures or repeating the well-worn precepts. He who begins to live thus, climbs those peaks from where Truth is invariably discovered.

So the second rule is: THE WITNESS-STATE: TO LIVE LIFE AS A MERE SPECTATOR -- AS IF A MAN IS GOING ON THE SCREEN OF LIFE AND WE ARE MERELY WATCHING IT.

Carry out this experiment and see what happens. Life will look different. Resolve one day, that from six in the morning to six in the evening, you Will be no more than a spectator. Then life will look a story on the screen. On the very first day, something new will begin to happen to you. After this experiment, you can never be the same again -- you will be a different person altogether.

Carry out this experiment this very day. When you go home and your wife makes accusations or your husband becomes provocative, watch as if you were an outsider. Observe life on the roads and in the market-place and at the office, as if it were a play. One day's watchful experiment, and you will be a different person altogether. A day is too long a time; an hour of this watchful observation and you feel your life taking a new turn. What you observe within an hour will make you wonder. One hour, and the transformation will change the alchemy within. It will cause new points in the consciousness to sprout forth. Observe for one hour -- whatever occurs, watch as a play and see what happens... you will laugh and the laughter will spread within; giving a wonderful lightness and freshness to your being. Till yesterday, what weighed on the mind like a grindstone and spread poison within, disturbing the very life-breath; and what made life a mere reaction, becomes totally different. The situation that caused a storm yesterday, loses its venom before the witness as a live coal falling in water ceases to burn. And you will wonder! That which gave trouble and pain till yesterday, what has happened to it now? It is still the same, only you have changed. The world is the same, it will always remain the same; only people change; and when man changes, the world changes with him.

SO THE FIRST MAXIM IS: LIFE IS A DREAM.

THE SECOND MAXIM IS: LIVE LIKE A WITNESS IN THIS DREAM.

It is difficult to explain what happens to a man who begins to live in the Witness-State. One has to live in this state to know what it is. It can only be known and grasped through

experiment. So experiment and see. Give up the anxiety of going to the temple, for life itself becomes a temple if you stand as a witness. Give up the idea of climbing the Himalayas in search of truth; life becomes pilgrimage as soon as the witness awakens within. Whenever and wherever the witness-state comes into being, that every moment life becomes a sacred shrine -- it is a unique experience altogether!

Socrates was going to die. His executioners were preparing poison for him. Socrates reclined peacefully on his bed, his friends and admirers sat around him weeping.

"Why do you cry?" asked Socrates.

"What else can we do? You are about to die and we are filled with pain!"

"You dear foolish people!" said Socrates, "Then you should have cried the day I was born, for death starts along with life. Now it is too late."

The end of the story starts approaching as soon as the story begins; when a play starts it is bound to end. The end comes soon enough. It is hidden in the beginning.

"That we shall die, was understood the day we were born," said Socrates.

"There the matter ends. Then why the tears? And if you must cry, cry for yourselves. Why weep for me, who does not weep for his death? Go and see if the poison is ready."

When they did not move, he got up himself. "It is nearing six, and yet the poison is not ready? Hurry, it is getting late!" ho told the men who were grinding the poison.

"We have administered poison to many but to never a fool like you. We are grinding slowly so that you may live a few moments more. Where is the hurry to die?" they asked;

"There is no hurry as such," said Socrates. "I have seen a good deal of life, now I wish to see death also. One play has finished now I am eager to witness the beginning of the next."

The poison was handed over to Socrates. He drank as if he was witnessing some other person drinking, the poison. He then lay down and began to observe himself.

"The feet have begun to get cold," said Socrates.

"It is not only the feet -- you have started to become cold," said his friends.

' How can that be, when I can .feel the feet getting cold? I am the same as before... Now the poison has come up to the knees... Now it spreads over my abdomen.. . Now the hands and feet feel as if they are not there -- I can feel them no longer."

"You talk thus and you, yourself, are turning cold!" his friends wailed.

"But I am as I was before the poison was given. The only difference is that the hands and feet are gone. The story of these hands and feet has come to an end. Another one will start now perhaps, but I am the same; I am still the observer."

He who has always observed life, observes death also; and how can death come to him who can face it? For he who is accomplished in the Witness-State, attains eternity.

Swami Ram went to America. He was a strange person. A few such individuals are born once in a while in the world; and that is how this earth becomes an interesting place. He was a very strange man. If anyone abused him in the streets, he would stand and laugh. He would go home and

tell his friends: "Shall I tell you something? Ram was abused like anything today in the market-place!"
When people asked: "Ram was abused -- or you?"
He replied: "Me? Who knows me? Nobody knows me. How will they abuse me? They know Ram and so abuse him. And when they reviled him, I was sitting within and watching the fun. 'Now take the brick-bats, sir!' I told him."
"Ram went to a village..." That is how Swami Ram spoke of himself: "Ram went to a village and he fell in a ditch! How T laughed! 'Well done!' I said: 'that is what happens when you do not watch your step!'"
When people asked him, "Who are you talking about?" He would reply: "Who? Ram, of course!"
"And who are you?"
"I am just a spectator. This is the story of Ram that I am witnessing. It is Ram's drama, and I am watching it."
This technique of becoming an observer in life is the essence of the secret of religion. Witness life, and an altogether new life begins. This beginning ends in Truth; in that reality which is never born, which never dies and which is not a dream If we remain in a somnolent state, absorbed in dreams, this reality may be lost to us.
There are very few fortunate ones who realize the truth of existence. The majority of us live and die in slumber. We have to awaken from this dream life, in order to realize That which is not a dream; we have to become aware of the drama in order to recognize that which is not a drama. That reality is the soul itself, God Himself. Whatever name we give it -- truth, god, the universal spirit -- man is liberated as soon as he realizes it. Since all lies belong to the dream-world, they are false and untrue. Once this is experienced,

one realizes that one was always free! What immeasurable bliss and joy this knowledge brings in its wake! There is no way of gauging its dimensions, nor can it be expressed in words, nor is there a method of conveying this joy. It can only be lived and experienced.

In the direction of living in Truth, it is important to remember these two rules:

(i) Life is a dream; (ii) We are the witness.

This can only be felt and understood by experimentation. Put these two rules to trial; for until you experiment, you will not get even a vague notion of reality.

Nothing helps to discover reality: neither the telling of beads nor the chanting of mantras; nor the reading of the Geeta or the Koran; nor also by going to temples and performing the various types of worship. These are not the ways; nor does any other method disclose Truth except the awakening to the unreality of temporal life, and becoming a mere witness to it. It is then alone that the positive change takes place, and everything is transformed.

But this is a matter of self-application and nobody else can do it for you. You will have to traverse this path yourself; it cannot be done by proxy. The peaks of Girnar, can be reached by hiring a palanquin, but there is no such arrangement to scale the heights of Truth: one has to rely on one's own feet. Also, there are no marked roads that lead to Truth. One has to make one's own path as one goes along.

As we proceed in this witness-state, so the path unfolds before us; and once the door opens, no matter how little, there is so much left to be done by ourselves. That lithe opening then, keeps calling the individual; it attracts him so

that he cannot help but be drawn towards it. If a man jumps from a roof, he cannot stop to ask what he has to do next; the ground will do the needful -- the gravitation of the earth will pull him down. His work is over as soon as he leaps; the earth then takes over and finishes the rest for him.
Once a man leaps into the witness-state, he has nothing more to do himself. Then the pull of the Universal Spirit, the gravitation of God, does the rest. As long as we stand in the dream world, this power does not work, but as soon as we break through the dream world, and jump out of it, the pull of God begins to work. Then, when a man walks one step towards God, he walks a thousand step towards him. Then, a slight effort and the reward is a thousand-fold; one feeble call evokes a flood of response from Him!
But we are such, we refuse to budge even an inch from our dream-state. Rather, we are forever occupied in strengthening its walls from all sides. He who is surrounded by lesser things, begins to dream of bigger things. A member of parliament begins to dream of becoming a cabinet minister; one staying in a hut dreams of owning a palace. The dream of living in a hut is a painful dream; the dream of living in a palace is an enjoyable dream; so all those whose dreams are painful, dream of more fulfilling dreams. Those in Junagadh, wish themselves in Delhi... and so the dreams are preserved and strengthened because we refuse to stop dreaming. And the more we dream, the further we are from Truth. Dreams are to be destroyed and not nurtured -- but we are displeased and upset if anyone talks of destroying our dreams!
A famous doctor of England has dedicated a book to George Gurdjieff -- a western fakir. His words of

dedication have appealed to me immensely: "To George Gurdjieff -- the disturber of my sleep." There are a few such in the world, who disturb our sleep but they are never liked nor appreciated: for the world is fast asleep, lost to its dreams. Then, when such a one comes along, who disturbs our sleep and tries to shake us out of our torpor, we oppose him with all our might. But alas, the one who has stepped outside the dream world, finds his soul yearning to get others also out of their slumber, to witness That which lies outside the dream world -- to know the world of Truth.
Those that know not truth, know not life, and in their slumber they let life's meaning pass by. They lose everything because of their apathy.
Those that sleep are the losers; those that have awakened, they alone attain the wealth, the beauty, the prosperity of life. Please remember these two short rules: Life is a dream and man has to be only a witness thereof. As the witness-state develops, the dreams begin to break until only That remains in the end, which is the Reality, which is the Truth.

The Beginning of the Beginning

Chapter #5

Chapter title: From Emptiness Towards Truth
27 February 1969 pm in

Many questions are before me. One friend has asked: "If the soul cannot be seen, then why is so much importance given to something invisible? Why do you also talk about this same unseen atman?"

The trees are visible, not so the roots that lie hidden in the ground beneath. That does not mean that they are of less significance. Rather, the visible tree is entirely dependent on the invisible roots for its existence. If we tend the tree and neglect the roots, the tree is sure to die. No longer will it give out flowers and fruits, for its very life-breath lies hidden in the roots. Whatever is of consequence in life, is always hidden from view. What is manifest is the outer cover; what remains unmanifest is the soul within. The body can be seen for it is the outer covering; that which is within the body, is not open to view. This does not decrease its value however. Its quest becomes all the more necessary because it is invisible.

May it not happen, that we go through life mistaking the apparent manifestations of life as the be all and end all of existence. May it not happen that we live through life, taking the apparent world as real and of consequence. That also exists, which is imperceptible and invisible -- in the sense that it cannot be seen with the ordinary eye. But he who develops his insight and cultivates his understanding and power of discretion, soon begins to see That which is. There is a continuous movement of thoughts within us; but if the skull is opened up for dissection, there is no sign of them within! The scientist will declare, that technically speaking, thoughts do not exist; but we all know that thoughts are very much there, for we experience them. If thoughts cannot be proved in a laboratory, it only means that the apparatus used, are too coarse to detect the subtle element of thought. Some experiments have been conducted of late however, and very soon we shall be able to develop the method of detecting thoughts.

One university in America has carried out a test in this connection. A man was made to sit before a very sensitive camera and he was asked to concentrate with all his energy on a single thought. The camera was loaded with an extra sensitive film and it was hoped that if a thought was projected with full concentration, this film might be able to catch its reflection. The man fixed his mind on a knife, with one-pointed attention and to the wonder of all, the film showed the picture of a knife. The camera was successful in catching the subtle waves of the mind. This was the first time that thought was ever photographed.

There is a great scientist in Soviet Russia by the name of Fiadov. He carried out an experiment in telepathy over a distance of a thousand miles. Sitting in Moscow, he sent a wave of thought-vibrations, without the help of any instruments, to a place called Tiflis, a thousand miles away. A few men were stationed in a garden in Tiflis to keep watch over a bench that bore the number ten. Soon a man came and sat down on this bench. Fiadov was informed that the seat was now occupied.

Sitting in Moscow, Fiadov began to concentrate on him and send him suggestions: "Go to sleep, go to sleep"... The man on bench number ten fell fast asleep in three minutes! Fiadov was duly informed but he was told to give more proof of his experiment. It could have been that the man was tired and had gone off to sleep. He was asked to wake him up in five minutes. Fiadov sent a fresh wave of suggestion to the sleeping man: "Get up! Get up within five minutes..." Within five minutes, this man, a thousand miles away, awoke from his sleep; and to the astonishment of all the observers, he looked anxiously from side to side, as if

he were looking for someone. They went up to him and asked him what had caused him to get up so startled.
"I am puzzle," said the man. I came and sat here, as I normally do every day. Then it seemed to me as if someone was coaxing me to go to sleep! I thought perhaps I was tired and it was my mind telling me to rest. So I went to sleep; but hardly five minutes had gone by, when the same voice ordered me to get up. 'Get up' it said, 'Get up within five minutes. I am so intrigued -- who could it be?"
Fiadov has carried out very many experiments in telepathy and given proofs thereof. Thoughts cannot be seen but they are very much there; the soul is even more invisible but it is very much there.
Those who enter the depths of meditation are, in a manner of speaking, able to "see" the soul. The roots of the tree are hidden but if we start digging around the base of the tree. roots can be seen. It is a similar action when one concentrates and tries to separate the living consciousness from the gross body. This leads to the seeing of the Self within.
There was a Muslim fakir by the name of Sheikh Fareed, People came from far and near to touch his holy feet. One man asked him: "It is said that Jesus was smiling when he was being crucified. How could this be? And it is said that when the limbs of Mansoor were being cut off, he too was laughing. When they pierced his eyes, there was not a twinge of pain on his face! This is impossible."
Fareed picked up a green coconut near him and handing it to the man, told him to break it for him without injuring the kernel.

"That is not possible," said the man. "The coconut is tender, and the kernel is stuck fast to the shell, When I break the coconut, the kernel is bound to break."
Fareed picked up a dry coconut. "What about this one?" he asked.
"There is no problem with this one, for the fruit is dry and the kernel is free of the shell," replied the man.
"Exactly!" said Farced, "and you have got your answer. There are people who are attached to the shell of the body. If the body is hurt, they are hurt. There are others who so detach themselves from the body, that even when the latter is severely castigated, they are not affected. Jesus and Mansoor were like the dry coconut and the likes of you are green coconuts -- that is what I wanted to tell you."
The body alone is visible because That which is within, is so integrated with the body, that it cannot be located separately. If we can separate the two, it can be observed. Now the question of the importance of the soul: The soul is THE Thing, hence its significance. The body is not of much value -- of what value are clothes? The perpetual is to be prized and not the transient clothes do not have the same importance as the wearer of the clothes. So also, the body does not have the same significance as the Self that resides within the body. No one knows how many bodies this soul has acquired and how many it has abandoned! Its journey is long but we do not know anything about it -- for we know only the body, the covering and take it to be the thing. Those who know will tell you that that which is within is the real Truth. What is outside, is the covering that changes and keeps changing every day. Perhaps you do not know that your body of today, is not at all the body you were

born with? The cluster of cells within the embryo in the mother's womb, was something entirely different from what you are now. The body changes every minute -- as the waters of the river. Scientists say that every cell in the body will be replaced, so that in seven years' time, we have a completely new body. If a man lives for seventy years, his body changes ten times The body is a perpetual flow but within there is something that does not flow It is the same forever.

The body passes from infancy to youth and from youth to old age -- but you? You are the same today as you were yesterday, and you will be the same tomorrow and in the days to come. This is the reason why you can remember that you were once a child. If you had undergone a complete change there would be no one left behind to remember I knew the body when it was a child; now that it is young, I know it as such. When it gets old, I shall know it as such. Those with deeper understanding are also aware of death when it comes, and are capable of witnessing the same.

When Sikandar was about to set out for India, his friends said: "When you return, bring a sanyasin from India along with you, for genuine sanyasins are found only in India " As he returned homewards, after plundering many lands, he remembered his promise. He was passing through a village of the Punjab. He told his men to go and find out if there were a sanyasin in the village and ordered them to bring him with them. The village folk told his men: "There is a sanyasin who stays by the sea-shore, but we are not sure if you could take him."

The men went and told Sikandar. "Do not worry," he told his men. "It's no great task to capture him. How can a poor mendicant stand up against the great Sikandar?"
The village people laughed: "Perhaps you do not know the might of a man of God. It is easy to kill him but impossible to move him even an inch."
All this was beyond Sikandar's understanding, for those who live by the might of the sword cannot imagine a power superior to it. Sword in hand, he set out to meet the fakir
His men went in advance to inform him.
"The mighty Sikandar is coming to see you," they told him. "Be prepared."
The fakir laughed: "What! The mighty Sikandar? Does he too think he is great?"
"Certainly"' said the men. "And that is what he is out to prove to the world."
"Tell that fool," said the sanyasin, "A great man never sets out to prove his greatness. If he does so, he only betrays his smallness within."
"Sikandar was filled with rage when he heard this. He went up to him and at the point of the sword, ordered him to follow.
"Whom do you order?" asked the fakir. "Know that I take orders from nobody. When we stop taking orders from others, and obey the orders from within, we become sanyasins. We live as we please, obeying no earthly sire -- as the wind goes wherever it pleases, so we go wherever we please. It seems you are wholly ignorant of the ways of a sanyasin."
"I am not prepared to listen to all this. You will have to follow me. My command has never been disobeyed. If you

choose to resist, your head will part company from the rest of your body."
"You poor, foolish, ignorant man!" said the fakir. "The head you threaten to sever, I have long since known to be apart from me. It matters little whether it is on my shoulders or not. If you cut my neck, I shall see the head rolling off to the ground, the same way as you do. You will see and I will see -- we both shall see; and do not be under the illusion that you are killing me. That which you destroy is not me; and That which I am, you can never destroy. This is for what I had gone in quest. Now the quest is over, and the experience is complete."
Sikandar did not know what to do. On his return to Greece, he told his friends: "I met a sanyasin in India but could not bring him with me. No threat worked on him, for the man did not fear even death!"
No one can have a hold on him who does not fear death. We are afraid of death, and therefore vulnerable. Why are we afraid of death? We are afraid of death because we take all that is perceptible as the actual reality. The visible world is transitory and hence the fear of death. But those who discover the hidden self within, which is immortal, rise about death.
And you ask the worth of such a Self? That alone, is Existence; that alone is Immortal; that alone is Truth. The body holds as much value as a house; but the owner who stays within cannot be evaluated with the same measure. But there are fools, who sell the owner to save the house, who take the body to be everything and forget the Self.
As Swami Ram was passing through the streets of Tokyo, he saw a big mansion in flames. He waited with the crowd

to watch this great disaster. The owner of the house stood outside on the road as his servants brought out the valuables from within the house. When they thought everything of value had been removed, they came to ask if anything else was left behind. "My son!" cried out the owner of the house. "Where is my son?" Just then, two men brought out the dead body of the son, the owner and the inheritor of all his wealth. The man was beside himself with grief. "What shall I do with all this wealth, when the one for whom it was, is no more!"

"Swami Ram writes in his diary: "I witnessed a strange happening today, but very true. Today I saw the owner of a house burnt to death, while everyone was busy saving his belongings from the flames. I have also, this day, come to the conclusion, that this is what is happening all over the world."

Each man is busy saving the house and letting the owner perish: because the house is visible, while the owner is not. But we forget that. That which cannot be seen, exists all the same and that which is seen exists because of it. The foundation is invisible on which the visible house stands. This seems converse, that That which cannot be seen is authentic, for we take the apparent world as real. Life is a big riddle; here everything is topsy-turvy; and from these inverse rules, all things are made.

You pick up a stone and examine it. Does it ever occur to you that it is made up of invisible things? Ask a scientist: He will say that it is made up of atoms. But atoms are invisible. Similarly, all that is visible is a synthesis of invisible components.

You must have seen little children revolving burning torches, round and round at the festival of Holi. The flame forms a circle. The circle appears to exist, whereas actually it does not; for it is in fact, the burning torch that goes round and round and the speed covers up the interim space. The scientists say that the atoms revolve so fast that they cannot be seen. Therefore we can "see" the stone and everything else in this world. This is a miracle. Matter is that which can be seen; but those who know (and now the scientists also agree), say that there is notifying like matter. Nietzche said about eighty years ago: "God is dead!" God is not dead but matter is dead. Matter does not exist. There is nothing like matter and whatever appears so, is an illusion. But we will not agree. How can that which is so plainly visible, be an illusion?

Look at the sky above. You see the star; but perhaps you do not know that the star is not where it appears to be! The star ,has moved further on, but because its rays take a long time to reach the earth, it appears to be there where the rays first started. If the rays of a star takes, say, sixty years to reach the earth, the star will have long moved out from that position by the time these rays reach the earth, and we see it. It could also be possible that that star may have disintegrated by then. Yet its light is visible to us and will be visible to us for another sixty years. Thus all the skies are illusory and so false! The stars are not where you see them and you cannot see them where they are.

Life is very very strange. This matter that we see does not exist. This body that appears so compact is also a mere synthesis of atoms, and That which is of the greatest significance, lies hidden within! That is consciousness on

which depends all play of life. The more you try to find this consciousness, the more elusive it becomes.
In these three days, we have talked on some suggestions, some hints and some rules in the quest of this Truth. That which is invisible is of great importance and hence the need to talk on it. When this body falls, as it is sure to one day, only that remains which is invisible hence it is very useful and very necessary to talk about it and to find ways and means of attaining it. Those that stagnate in the visible world are unfortunate.
One friend asks: "Are you against restraint and continence?"
Definitely so. I am against all restraint, especially the restraints that are brought about by force and pressure. I am in favour of that moderation, which comes as a result of right understanding. Both these statements should be rightly understood. There is one moderation that man forces upon himself. He is one person without, but quite a different person within. The majority of people who bring moderation upon themselves are like this. Outwardly, this man practises non-violence: he strains the water he drinks; he forgoes food at night; he takes all kinds of precautions not to commit violence and feels proud of his self-restraint; but all the while violence smoulders within.
Sex rages within and he practises celibacy from without. He is filled with wrath within, but his face is all smiles. he implants all virtues from outside, while his within is filled with just the opposite of these virtues. Such self-restraint is very dangerous. It is like sitting on a volcano.
There lived in a village a very hot-tempered man. In a fit of rage one day, he pushed his wife into the well. She died and

this filled him with remorse -- as is the way with all people of violent temperament. This repentance, however, does not help, for such people soon become the same as before. He was very unhappy and refused to be consoled by those around him. Then a sanyasin happened to come to that village. His friends took the man to see him with the hope that the sanyasin may be ab!e to soothe his spirit. The wave of penitence was as yet very high when he stood before the Muni and he confesses his guilt. He begged him to show him the way to conquer anger.

"It is difficult for an ordinary house-holder to conquer wrath,'" said the sanyasin. "You will have to practise self-restraint. If you take sannyas, something can be done."

The sanyasin was a naked fakir, so the repentant man, in the fervour of his exuberance, stripped himself of all his clothes without a thought and bowing at the feet of the Muni, asked for initiation that very moment. The Muni was surprised at such a courageous resolve!

"I have yet to see a man of such singular will-power," he said.

It was no matter of will-power, actually. The fact was that the wrathful man pushed himself into sannyas with the same vigour that he had pushed his wife into the well. The fever of anger was the same, there was no difference, but the Muni mistook it as a sign of powerful determination. Usually people of violent temper become ascetics and hermits, for wrath can bring forth great penance. It is a dangerous energy. Wrath can cause a man to chastize his own person as much as he is capable of chastizing others, and with a vengeance! Wrath revels in castigation. Ninety-eight per cent of those who practise penance are people of

violent temperament. They merely revert their anger from others to themselves and begin tormenting themselves with as much relish.

There are two types of violence in this world. One is directed towards others: this is sadism. And there is another type of violence that is directed towards the person's own self: this is called masochism. There is as much pleasure in one as there is in the other.

The Muni lauded the man and praised his good fortune -- what a momentous decision he had made! Proofs started to pour in of the initiate's earnest resolve. He performed the most arduous penance and soon outdid the others. His guru named him, Shantinath, for he was engaged in conquering anger. As years passed by, his fame spread and people from far and near came to worship him. When other sadhus sat in the shade, he stood in the gruelling heat of the sun; when others walked on smooth roads, he walked on thorny foot-paths; when others ate once a day, he ate once in three days. His body looked like a veritable skeleton. The more people venerated him, the greater became his enmity towards his own self: He decided a thousand ways of self-torture and his fame increased accordingly.

Then one day, he reached a big town where his fame had reached before him. There lived an old friend of his in this city, who was shocked to hear that his erstwhile comrade of volatile temperament, had become a sanyasin! He could not believe it, so he went to see him. The Muni was seated on a high seat; and when they are thus installed, be they saints or politicians, they fail to see those seated before them. That is the elation of the Ego -- the world knows him but he knows no one. The sanyasin saw his friend of bygone years but

pretended not to know him. The friend could also see that he had recognized him but did not want to acknowledge him. This made him doubt whether he had really conquered anger, for anger and ego are brothers. If one comes, the other is bound to follow.

The friend went and sat close to the dais and said: "Your Lordship, I have heard a great deal about you. Your fame spreads far and wide but what exactly is your name?"

The Muni lost his temper at his feigned ignorance. "Don't you read the papers?" he asked. "Don't you hear the radio? Everyone is talking about me. My name is Muni Shantinath. Know it once and for all." The friend thanked him with folded hands and praised his forbearance.

After a few minutes, the friend asked again: "Please sir, what was your name that you said? It has slipped my mind."

It was difficult for the Muni to control his anger. "Are you out of your mind? I told you my name was Muni Shantinath!"

"Forgive the inconvenience. I am grateful to you for telling me your name once again."

After some time, he again caught the Muni's feet: "I am ashamed of my memory. Forgive me please but what did you say was your name?"

The Muni picked up his staff, and shaking it at the man said: "You deserve to be beaten. Where are your brains? I told you my name is Muni Shantinath!"

"Everything is intact in its own place, my Lord!" said the friend.

"My intelligence is where it should be and your anger is where it always was. I had come to find out whether you were really rid of your anger."

All the self-restraint had suppressed the wrath within. The violent can thus appear non-violent; the anger-ridden appear sweet and forgiving, the greedy cultivates renunciation and the debauchee becomes celibate; but this brings no actual transformation. All transformations start within. When one becomes self-cognizant, one's conduct automatically changes; but by changing the conduct alone there is no inward change. I am against all those modes of self-control which lay stress on conduct. And I am in favour of that self-restraint that is born within and spreads all over the nature of the person.

Both these methods follow different routes. The restraint implanted from without is the outcome of repression: according to this, if there is anger within suppress it; if there is violence within; subdue it and bring forth from outside the opposites of these. The right self restraint does not come this way. By suppressing violence, non-violence is not attained. On the contrary, by understanding and recognizing violence and by seeking the source of violence within, one awakens gradually towards violence, which then subsides on its own. When violence fades, what remains is non-violence.

So there are two types of non-violence: (i) what is cultivated by suppressing non-violence; and (ii) non-violence that is born when violence fades from within. But man has been taught to cultivate self-restraint since time unknown! Therefore there are many lessons in moderation but the extremes in life far exceed these

lessons. Since thousands of years there have been discussions on temperance and self-control but man has failed to be moderate and normal. Why is this so? The more talk of celibacy there is in a society, the more sexually obsessed the people will be. It becomes a matter of great concern then. The logic of the situation is: whatever we try tc suppress permeates deeper and deeper and settles in the deeper layers of consciousness. Suppression binds, it does not liberate. Try to suppress something and you find yourself bound hand and foot to it.

One evening, as Mulla Nasruddin was setting out to call on some of his friends, an old friend happened to come along. It was twenty years since they had seen each other. Both were beside themselves with joy. "It is ages since we met." said Nasruddin. "I am so very happy to see you. You rest awhile and refresh yourself for the journey must have been long and tiring. I shall go quickly to see a few friends I have promised to visit."

"Oh no!" said the friend "I have not the heart to waste even a minute of your company. I will go along with you and we can talk on the way, if you will lend me a coat, for my clothes are dirty."

Now Nasruddin had a set of expensive clothes presented to him by the king, which he had kept by for a befitting occasion. They were an expensive coat, a turban, and a pair of shoes. He had never worn them but today was a special day, and what could be more befitting than that his childhood friend should make use of them! He quickly brought them out and gave them to his friend. He was so happy that the clothes had come in handy at the right moment!

But when the friend appeared, dressed in the royal attire, Nasruddin felt a twinge of jealousy. The clothes looked gorgeous and his friend looked so handsome in them. Had he done a wise thing by giving him these clothes. He looked almost like a servant before him! It is too hard on a man to see another looking rich and handsome in his clothes, while he looked like a beggar before him! Had the clothes belonged to the friend, even then it would have been a difficult situation -- but this was worse!

Nasruddin tried to get over this feeling by telling himself of the higher virtues of life, as all men of temperance do: "What difference does it make whether the clothes are mine or his? He is a very dear friend, and that is all that matters. What is there in clothes?" Thus he cajoled himself trying to convince himself of the worthlessness of jealousy. But alas whoever they met had his eyes glued on the friend and his clothes.

The world looks at clothes and not the man. Nobody so much as glanced at Nasruddin, so that in spite of all his sanctimonious talk, he was filled with pain and suffering.

At last they reached the first house of call. The door opened and Nasruddin's friend came out, but his eyes were caught by the richness of the friend's attire! Nasruddin noted this and began to introduce his friend: "This is my childhood friend, an extremely fine person but as for his clothes, they are mine." In an unguarded moment, the words fell out and Nasruddin feet great remorse. The friend was astonished at his behaviour and so were the people of the house.

When they came out, the friend reproved him: "Forgive me but I cannot accompany you any further. You have insulted me. Had I known, I should have accompanied you in my

own clothes, even though they were dirty -- they were mine! Where was the need to point out the clothes?"
Nasruddin begged forgiveness: "Forsooth, there was no need. Pray forgive me; it was a slip of the tongue!" he said.
The tongue never slips -- remember this always. What goes on within the mind comes invariably on the tongue. That which is suppressed within comes out in an unguarded moment, as steam bursts forth from a closed kettle. The kettle is not at fault. The steam collects within and wishes to get out. Even if the kettle bursts, it has to get out.
"If you say so, I believe you," said the friend. "But be mindful at the next house." Nasruddin promised to watch his words. And to prove his sincerity, he even made a gift of the clothes to his friend. "They are yours from now on," he told him.
They came to the next house. Here also, the man of the house and his wife could not help staring at the friend and his attire. Again it came to Nasruddin: "How foolish of me to give him the clothes right away! I cannot hope to see myself in them."
And when the time came to introduce the friend Nasruddin began: "Meet my childhood friend, an extremely nice person and as for his clothes, they are his, not mine."
Again Nasruddin slipped! To say that the clothes were not his, creates a doubt. The friend refused to go any further. Nasruddin begged of him to give him just one more chance, otherwise he would suffer remorse all his life. It was a mistake committed because of the first mistake. He pleaded with his friend, attributing his statement to various reasons; but it was a clear case of suppression.

Now Nasruddin entered the third friend's house with a vow that he would not mention the clothes. But the clothes, by now, had taken possession of every inch of his being, and like all persons of self-restraint, he put up a brave front outside. Little did the friend suspect what was happening within poor Nasruddin. He looked all right on the outside, but within, he was verging on insanity. Wherever he looked, he saw clothes and nothing but clothes. It filled him with anger and pain but do as he would, he could not subdue this feeling. So he began to repeat his resolve to himself, lest he slipped again: "I must not talk about clothes -- I must not talk about clothes!"

And now he was called upon to introduce the guest once again! Poor Nasruddin, with clothes littered all over his consciousness, he began the introduction: "This is my friend. We have known each other for many years and now he comes to visit me after a long absence; and as for his clothes, I have sworn not to mention to whom it belongs."

A suppressed mind works in this manner. It gets involved with the very thing it tries to suppress. The mind gets diseased, obsessions are formed -- is this self-restraint? Definitely not. But this is how it has been defined over the years. Even today when someone starts to practise moderation, he begins with self-repression. The result is that the perverted forms of the very thing he tries to suppress, take possession of his mind.

I was once sitting with a sanyasini at the sea-shore. The lady was talking to me about Soul and Over-Soul, liberation and beatitude. We always talk of things that normally do not concern us, and perhaps, we never talk of things that occupy our mind. She talked, and I listened.

Then a strong wind arose in the sea and blew my mantle towards her. It fluttered and touched her and she became very upset. I was surprised, so I asked her why the touch of my cloth had upset her so. She said: "It is forbidden for us to touch men's clothing. I shall have to perform penance."
"But just now you were saying you are not the body, you are the soul; and now you attribute sex even to a piece of clothing. Does cloth touched by men become masculine?" I asked her.
These are the traits of suppressed sexuality, of suppressed desires, and of a suppressed mind. It has been so badly repressed that even a piece of cloth acquires meaning.
"If you have come to realize that the soul is not the body, then there is no cause for alarm even if you touch a man's body -- for the body is dust," I told her. Unfortunately we become all the more conscious of that which we suppress, which then tries to hold us from different angles in different forms.
I was staying once with a sadhu. Every day, in the course of conversation, he would tell me, "I have kicked a fortune of lakhs!" He would repeat this about half a dozen times with some excuse or the other in the course of the day.
"When did this happen?" I asked him. "About thirty-five years ago," he replied.
"The kick does not seem to have been very effective," I said, "Or else there was no need to be reminded of it, time and again. You renounced a fortune, that was the end of the matter."
The lakhs of rupees still pursued the man. He kicked them away, but they followed him and made their nest in his mind. Repression did not bring renunciation, in spite of all

the self-control. When the lakhs were with him, he strutted proudly -- the owner of lakhs. Now he renounced them, and his arrogance doubled! The second conceit is worse than the first, for the former can be recognized while the latter is so subtle. It is suppression in another form and this we look upon as self-control and we call such men renunciates!

I was in Jaipur. A friend came along and said: "A great mahatma has come to the town. You should go and visit him." I asked him how he measured the mahatma's greatness -- what scales he employed.

"There is no need to measure him. That the Maharaja of Jaipur touches his feet, is enough proof of his greatness."

"In that case," I said, "the Maharaja is great, for whosoever he venerates automatically becomes great!" Thus renunciation is also measured in terms of wealth.

Have you ever pondered over the fact that all the twenty-four Teerthankars of the Jains, were the sons of kings? Buddha was a prince and so was Ram and also Krishna -- they were all the sons of kings. Not a single Teerthankar was a poor man's son! What is the reason? Is it necessary to be rich in order to be a Teerthankar? It is not so. Even poor men's sons have been Teerthankars but we have had no means of measuring them. We only weigh in terms of gold; the greater the wealth, the greater the renunciation. This way renunciation becomes another form of wealth. It becomes an investment for beatitude. This then becomes another state, another symbol of wealth.

I was in Ahmedabad, two years ago. Several speakers took part in a general meeting. One who spoke before me said: "Shun greed if you wish to be liberated." When my turn came to speak, I said: "The worthy speaker who spoke just

now, made a wonderful statement. He says: 'to attain liberation, we must give up greed.' He at the same time holds forth the temptation of liberation as he exhorts us to shun greed. If some poor avaricious man has heard him, he will be very ready to sacrifice one temptation for another. To covet beatitude is also avarice."

Life is very complicated and in this life-complex many inverse practices are rampant in the name of self-control, renunciation and liberation. I stand opposed to all these inverse practices. Life should be straight, clean, and lived in its entirety. It should not be broken up into bits and parts -- one thing within and another without. We should lead an integrated life -- what is within should also be without. We cannot change the internal self from without, though an external change can be brought about from within.

If wealth becomes meaningless to a person it will never occur to him to mention that he has renounced it, for the renunciation of that which holds no meaning, is meaningless. Every day we throw rubbish out of our houses but we do not go about informing all and sundry that we have renounced it! Rubbish cannot be renounced; it has to be thrown away. So if a man says he has thrown his fortune away, then it means that wealth as yet holds value for him, and he still looks upon wealth as wealth.

There was once a fakir who was a very poor man, but he never begged for alms nor asked anyone for help. He and his wife would cut wood in the forest and sell it in the market. In the evening they would buy just the bare necessities and give away the rest of their earnings to other needy folk. They never kept a penny aside but gave all away.

Once it so happened that it rained heavily for five successive days. They could not go to the jungle, so they had to go without food for all the five days On the sixth day, the sun came out. The old man and his wife made their way to the forest once again. As they were returning with their bundles of wood, the old man walking ahead and the old woman following him, the old man chanced to see the marks of hooves on the ground. On one side of the path lay an open bag from which some gold coins had spilled on the ground.

Then the old man thought as all men of self-restraint. They are always worried about other people's morals and are forever busy keeping tag on other people's activities; so much so that they even decide who will go to hell and what sort of punishment he will receive! Why does a moralist do this? He is doing nothing more than projecting what goes on within his own self.

The old man worried lest the old woman succumbed to temptation. He himself must have been tempted, or else this thought would never have come to him. He quickly went down on his knees and began to push the coins into a hole, and was still covering them with mud when the old woman came along. She asked him why he had stopped and what he was doing? Being a man of morals, the old man had taken a vow not to tell a lie.

All moralists act on principles, though the opposite of these principles is always present within them; or else, where is the need of taking these vows? You never vow to get past a door. You pass because that is the way to go out. A blind man however, may vow to do so. The blind always take

vows; those with eyes find no reason to do so. When a man is apprehensive of his own self, he takes vows.

The old man had vowed he would not tell a lie... Against what and whom does a man take a vow -- against his own self; against his own lying mind. So when the old woman asked, he perforce had to tell the truth.

"It would be better if you do not ask," he told her. "Since you ask, I must tell the truth: There was a bag of gold coins lying on the way-side. So that you may not be tempted, I quickly covered it with mud."

The old woman laughed out loud. "Oh Lord in heaven! I thought this man was freed from the lust of gold! You were going your way, and how was your attention drawn towards this bag and how did the gold of the ashrafis catch your eye? You differentiate between mud and gold and I was under the illusion that you were free of desires. Seeing you thus pile mud on mud, I am filled with shame! What could these trees be saying? This man is binding mud with mud!"

Both these are people of self-control. The old man's restraint is what one should be wary of. The woman too, is a person of self-discipline -- the type that transforms life into truth. If gold appears as mud, there is no necessity of covering it, nor is there the necessity of running away from it; nor the need to proclaim its renunciation from house-tops.

The matter finishes, like a dry leaf that falls from the tree. Neither the tree is aware of its falling, nor the leaf itself; nor does the wind gets news of its falling -- quietly, in utter silence, it falls to the ground. If a green leaf is broken, the tree feels the pain and so does the leaf. It leaves behind a wound, for it has been wrenched away from the tree. The

man who cultivates self-control, is one who plucks the green leaves that leave scars behind. These wounds then become painful.

I am in favour of that self-discipline that happens like the falling of a dry leaf. Certain things drop out from life, become meaningless, and life is transformed. "But how will they fall unless we fell them?" you might ask. If you remove them by force it will be like plucking green leaves. Therefore I say, do not pluck them. Try to understand them. Do not start to fight with evil; try to recognize it, try to know it.

For instance, if there is anger within, do not fight with it, know it, understand it. And when anger takes possession of you, shut yourself in a room and meditate on it. Look at anger -- where it is, what it is; where it has taken hold of your being, watch where all the flames of anger burn within the consciousness. You will be surprised -- the more you observe anger, the fainter it will become. The more conscious you become of anger, the sooner it will be destroyed. Then a moment will come when it will drop off from you, like a dry leaf! Then what remains within is peace, tranquillity.

Serenity is never obtained by subduing anger. When anger takes leave of you, serenity results. Remember: violence is not the opposite of non-violence. Non-violence is the absence of violence. In the same way, love is not the opposite of hate so that you could arrest hate and bring about love. Love results in the absence of hate. It is just as we burn a lamp in a dark night. As soon as the lamp is lighted, darkness vanishes. All other means of removing darkness are bound to fail. Darkness can only be removed

by light. Violence can also not be removed by fighting with it, nor can anger and hatred be removed this way. But lamps can be lighted -- lamps of knowledge. When lamps of knowledge begin to burn, all darkness flees forever.
One small story, and we shall finish our talk for the day. It is said that once Darkness went before God. Placing her head on His feet, she began to cry. God asked. "What is the matter, what is bothering you?"
"I am very unhappy?" she said. "I am terribly scared of your Sun. Every morning, as soon as he gets up, he begins to chase me. By evening when I am completely exhausted, he somehow lets me alone. I hardly manage to rest the night when I find him standing at my door. Then again the chase starts. He has been after my life ever since time began. What have I done that he harasses me so?"
God sent for the Sun and questioned him: "Why you erase Darkness? What has she done?"
"Darkness?" asked the sun. "Who is Darkness? I have never met her. Where does she live? I have never set eyes on her, so how can I harass her? At least I should be acquainted with my foe! Please call her so that I may beg her forgiveness and clear the misunderstanding."
God could not persuade Darkness to come before the Sun. This happened billions of years ago, they say. The problem remains still unsolved, for darkness is not the opposite of light but its absence.
Understand well the difference between "opposite" and "absence." If darkness is the opposite of light, we could throw a handful on a lamp and the light would go out. We cannot do that for the simple reason that, darkness is the absence, the non-presence, the non-being of light. It has no

existence of its own. Light has its own existence. When light is not, what remains is darkness. Darkness cannot he removed. It cannot be dealt with, directly. If you want to bring in darkness, you will have to do something to light. In exactly the same manner, all that is considered evil in life, I look upon as darkness be it greed, sex, anger. All that is bad in life, is full of darkness. Generally, we look upon one who fights this darkness as an ascetic, a man of temperance. I do not call him so. I consider the methods of such people as devices for insanity and hypocrisy; and neither a hypocrite nor a lunatic is in a desirable state of being.

Darkness is not to be fought with -- a lamp has to be lighted. In the presence of light, there is no darkness. Whatever is excellent in life, that alone is Truth. Its absence is neither the opposite nor the inverse of its presence. Its absence is its pure non-presence alone. Therefore a man of violence can cultivate non-violence but the violence remains within. A man may cultivate celibacy but sex will rage just as much within. Such self-control is deception and I am against it. I am in favour of that self-control, in which we do not subdue the evil, but awaken the good within. We do not remove darkness, but kindle a light within. such awakening transforms the man and takes him to the temple of Truth. He who awakens to the Truth, reaches this temple.

In the course of these three days, we talked about the journey to Truth. My words will not carry you, nor will the words of anyone else. Therefore my last request before we end this series of lectures: this journey can only be undertaken if you set out by yourself. If the journey was

possible through my words, it was an easy matter. Then everyone's journey would have long been over. We have heard Buddha and also Mahavir but mere listening has not helped anyone.

Those who think that by listening alone they can be transported to the realm of Truth are under an illusion. The road is to be traversed by each himself. No one can do anything for another, in the same way as I cannot breathe for you, or make love for you, or even walk for you, or die in your place. Then how can I attain Truth for you? No one can attain anything for another. Many a time when we hear a person talk on truth, we are so carried away that we feel we have reached. We feel we have already reached our destination! This is a dangerous illusion. May God forbid that anyone of you should feel this after hearing me.

Many people are deluded for they write to me: "We heard you and felt we have attained serenity." Mere listening is entertainment and cannot give serenity. By only listening, words are gained and not truth. Truth and tranquillity will only be obtained when you set out on the journey yourself. Whatever I have said, was not for you to listen to only -- but to practise. If something in my talk appeals to you, use your discretion and take the first step. A thousand scriptures are nothing compared to a single step taken on one's own. Do not worry that the road is long, for the longest distance is gained only step by step.

Gandhiji used to like a song -- a wonderful song. He had it sung in his ashram every day. It's opening line is: "One step is enough for me. I do not long for the distant scene!" But he who takes the initial step, reaches the distant scene! No one can walk more than one step at a time -- be he great or

small. We are all equal in this respect. Only one step is taken at one time, but all steps together complete a journey of thousands of miles.

A youth sat with a lantern on the outskirts of a village. He had to reach the distant mountain. The night was dark, and all he had to guide him was a hurricane lamp that barely lighted a distance of three feet. He calculated (some people are very clever at mathematics) the length of darkness up to the mountain to be ten miles, and the light of the lantern a distance of only three feet. So he divided ten miles by three feet -- and gave up!

Such massive darkness was impossible to overcome by so small a light. He sat down, waiting for the dawn. And then, an old man came along. He had a smaller lantern in his hand.

"Why are you sitting in this lonely place at this time of the night, son " he asked the boy.

"What else can I do? The night is dark and I have to reach those distant mountains. All I have is this lamp that hardly lights three feet ahead. How can I cover so much darkness with so small a light?"

"You foolish boy!" said the old man. "You do not have to cross all he ten miles at one time! Cross the first three feet with the light of the lamp and the lamp will light another three feet ahead. Then cross the next three feet and the lamp will light another three. The lamp will light your way as you proceed. You can traverse not only ten miles but ten thousand miles with the aid of this small lamp."

Step by step, darkness is overcome. One small step and life reaches far off scenes that are unseen by the eyes today; but one has to make a beginning. Then what seemed a mere

web of words, becomes the truths of life that sound so melodious even as we hear them. Would that we reach there, so that we know how truly melodious they are. You have heard me with such love and serenity during these last three days, for which I am grateful. Finally, I bow to the God within all. Accept my salutations.